WESLEY'S VETERANS

VOLUME 4

The Finsbury Library

EDITED BY
REV. JOHN TELFORD, B.A.

WESLEY'S VETERANS

STEVE McCormick

WESLEY'S VETERANS

LIVES OF
EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS
TOLD BY THEMSELVES

VOL. IV

JOHN PAWSON
JOSEPH COWNLEY
WILLIAM HUNTER
RICHARD RODDA
THOMAS HANSON
ROBERT ROBERTS

With Additions and Annotations

BY REV. JOHN TELFORD, B.A.

Schmul Publishers
Rare Reprint Specialists
Salem, Ohio 44460
76

Published as

EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS—

First Edition (3 *vols.*), 1837–8.
Second Edition (2 *vols.*), 1846.
Third Edition (6 *vols.*), 1865.

WESLEY'S VETERANS—

First Edition (*Vol. IV*), 1912.

Printed by
Old Paths Tract Society, Inc.
Shoals, Indiana 47581

CONTENTS

	PAGE
JOHN PAWSON	1
JOSEPH COWNLEY	122
WILLIAM HUNTER	170
RICHARD RODDA	193
THOMAS HANSON	223
ROBERT ROBERTS	234

WESLEY'S VETERANS

Vol. IV

JOHN PAWSON[1]

I was born in a very obscure village, near Leeds, in Yorkshire, November 12, 1737. My parents lived in good repute, were members of the Established Church, and constantly attended public worship; but were entire strangers to the power of godliness. They possessed, however, some degree of the fear of God, and, according to the light they had, trained up all their children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord. They taught us to say our prayers and repeat the Church Catechism, obliged us constantly to go to church, and would not suffer us to run into open sin. My father maintained his authority in his own house, and his word gave law to his children. I heartily bless God for this, as I am sensible that by this means I was kept from running into many and various evils, which I was exposed to in my childhood. At that time, alas! we had not the gospel preached in Thorner; and, dreadful as it may appear, I am quite of opinion there was not a single person, man or woman, in the place who had any saving know-

[1] From the *Methodist Magazine*, 1806. A shorter account of Mr. Pawson's life, in the form of a letter to John Wesley, appeared in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1779. The story here given is abridged from 'An Account of the Lord's Gracious Dealings with J. Pawson, Minister of the Gospel,' printed at Leeds in 1801.

ledge of God. The tree is known by its fruit; and I say this from a thorough acquaintance with the life and conversation of every one in the parish.

As I was my father's first-born son, he had an uncommon affection for me, and gave me as good an education as his circumstances would allow. As I was intended for the building business, all my time was taken up in learning what was proper to fit me for that employment, especially architecture. When I was about fifteen years of age, I was sent to Hull, to learn my business with a brother-in-law. I was then remarkably serious, loved retirement, and kept no company, but went to the church constantly, and met on Sunday evenings with a society of well-disposed people, in the vestry-room of the High Church. Whether these people were acquainted with the power of godliness, I know not, as I was then an entire stranger to everything of that kind myself; nor do I remember that any particular impressions of a spiritual nature were made upon my mind; only I thought, 'This is the way to serve God, and get safe to heaven.' Indeed, I judged myself to be a very good Christian, and had not a doubt but, die when I would, I should be everlastingly happy with God in His kingdom.

When I was about eighteen years old, I fell in company with some people who had much conversation respecting the Methodists, against whom I was exceedingly prejudiced, believing them to be an ignorant, foolish, and wicked people: therefore I had not the least desire to be acquainted with them; nor had I so much

curiosity as to wish to hear any of them preach, or to read any of their writings. One present strongly insisted that the Methodists, in general, were a very pious people; and, as a proof of it, said his wife was one of them; that she attended the church twice every Lord's day, and received the holy sacrament every Sunday; and that, on this account, they never cooked anything for dinner on that sacred day. I thought, 'Then she must be a good Christian indeed,' as going constantly to church and sacrament included the whole of religion, as far as I knew. This gave me a more favourable opinion of the Methodists, and I felt a desire to hear some of them. Accordingly, one evening, when I supposed they had preaching, I went; but when I came to the door of that poor obscure place in which they then preached in Hull,[1] it occurred to my mind that I had never been in a Dissenting meeting-house in my life; that I was a stranger to their way of worship; that I should not know when to kneel down, or when to stand up, and I should be ashamed. I therefore walked round the house, and returned home, and thought no more of the Methodists for several years. At this time the light of the gospel was wellnigh extinguished in Hull. But what a glorious change hath the Lord wrought in that town since then! How highly are the inhabitants favoured with the light of divine truth! They can hear the gospel in two or three churches, in several Dissenting meeting-

[1] The first society in Hull met in a room in the Ropery, removing later to the Butchery, now Queen Street.

houses, and in three Methodist chapels. At that time, a Methodist was held in supreme contempt, as that name implied everything that was low, mean, and despicable in the opinion of the world. But, through the infinite mercy of God, they are now better known ; and very differently thought of by great numbers of people.

In the year 1756 I began to follow my business at Harewood near Leeds.[1] Here I fell in with a company of exceeding wild, vain, and wicked young men ; but the Lord mercifully preserved me from being led astray by them. I certainly was in extreme danger, as I was very intimate with one of very loose morals. We lodged together, and I had an uncommon attachment to him. He took every method he could think of to entice me into sin ; but all his attempts were in vain. Outward iniquity appeared odious to me ; and in the evening, when he was gone out, I generally sung a psalm, prayed to God, and, at a proper time, went quietly to bed. Still, however, I was as great a stranger to the nature of true religion as ever. I despised the Methodists, and seriously thought myself much wiser and better than any of them. At that time there was only one poor, aged woman in Harewood who was called a Methodist, and she died just at the time I was brought to the knowledge of the truth. On her deathbed she sent for one of her neighbours, and said, ' This town will be visited with the gospel : I shall not live to see it, but you will. God will raise up a certain

[1] ' At Harewood House, the seat of Edwin Lascelles, Esq.'

young man, and he will begin to keep meetings near Hunter's Pond.' This exactly came to pass soon after she died; and the woman she spoke to was one of the first who embraced the gospel. I believe this poor but truly pious woman had long been praying that the Lord would have mercy upon her neighbours, and send the gospel among them; and He mercifully condescended to show her, on her death-bed, that her prayers should be answered. It was rather remarkable that the first person that was awakened in that town had been a most profane and ungodly man, and a determined enemy to the Methodists. But when he was brought to repentance, he opened his door, and I began a prayer-meeting at his house. He turned to God with his whole heart; and every one saw the change: he discharged the debts he had contracted in the time of his rebellion against God, maintained his family comfortably, and joined the society. He began to think soon after this, 'It costs me a penny a week at my class: this would be something towards sending one of my children to school. I will not be in the society; but I will attend the preaching and will walk closely with God.' Upon this, he left the society, and afterwards became quite melancholy; insomuch that he could not rest in his bed, but wandered about in the fields at night. He strove to sing vain songs, in order to drive those gloomy thoughts from his mind, but he was not able; he grew worse and worse, till he had nearly lost the use of his reason. He then joined the society again, sought the Lord with his whole heart,

and soon found Him a God gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and has since then been a steady follower of the Lord Jesus.

In the year 1758 a young woman lent my father two sermons, which had been preached at the Old Church in Leeds, by the Rev. Henry Crook,[1] who was then curate of Hunslet chapel. These sermons were so exceedingly censured, and the minister so ridiculed, that he published them in self-defence. Here I may justly stand and admire the wisdom and goodness of God. It was in reading these very sermons that my mind was enlightened respecting the way of salvation by faith in the Redeemer of mankind. The subject of one of these sermons was Isa. xxix. 11: 'And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed,' &c. In this he proved the necessity of divine illumination, and that without it the Scriptures are a sealed book, both to the learned and unlearned. The other was on Jer. vi. 16: 'Stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths,' &c. In this sermon he proved from the Bible and the Common Prayer-Book, as well as from the Articles of the Church, that salvation by faith is the good old way; and that besides it there is no other in which a lost sinner can find rest for his soul. Had he only attempted to prove his doctrine by the Scriptures, I should have thought he put his own sense upon them; but as he clearly showed that,

[1] See John Wesley's *Journal*, July 30, 1769, and Charles Wesley's *Journal*, September 25–7, 1756.

in the daily service of the church, we prayed for these things, I plainly saw that I had been praying for what I did not believe, and was deeply humbled before the Lord under a sense of my past sin and folly.

In June this year, I went to a feast at Askwith, with no other design but to get an opportunity to hear the Methodists. It happened to be the yearly meeting of the Quakers that day; and I went and heard a woman speak for more than an hour, but could not understand her at all. This was the first time I ever was in a Dissenting meeting of any kind. I went the same evening to Otley, and heard Mr. James Oddie preach an excellent sermon from Acts xiii. 38: 'Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,' &c. I was very much surprised to observe the serious and devout behaviour of the people, whom I had so much despised, and was highly delighted with the singing; but the discourse, delivered from the pulpit with such a heavenly solemnity, quite astonished me. I was permitted to stay to the society-meeting, and was obliged to conclude that if the people paid any regard to the excellent instructions given them, they must be patterns of piety and godliness. Here it was that the Lord fixed a resolution in my heart to seek and to serve Him, which, through His infinite mercy and love, has continued to this day, and which, I doubt not, will abide with me for ever. I returned to my uncle's, at whose house I then resided, but did not acquaint any

one of the family where I had been; but, in the course of our conversation, my uncle said, 'I pray God these Methodists may never get the upper hand: if they do we shall have dreadful work.' One present replied, 'Why, what do you think they will do?' 'Do?' said he; 'why, they will murder us all. Do they not damn all mankind but themselves? And if they will damn us, they will murder us too, you may be sure.' So ignorant were many people in these days respecting the Methodists and their designs.

I returned home fully purposed to seek the salvation of God, little thinking that any who loved me would oppose me in pursuing my best interests. But herein I was greatly mistaken. My father and mother, and all my relations, being as great strangers to the Methodists, and as deeply prejudiced against them as I had been, were astonished beyond measure, and used every means in their power to divert my mind from the object I had in view. As I had never disobeyed my father at any time, he thought that he had nothing more to do but to use his authority, which he did with all speed, and expressly forbade me to hear the Methodists any more. But I was obliged to disobey; and how was he surprised to find his authority disregarded! It gave me inexpressible pain to displease my father; but the salvation of my soul was at stake. My uncle was a single man, and in good circumstances. He had often promised what he would do for me; but he sent me word that I should never be the better for anything he had, except I left this way,

and he made his resolution good some years afterwards, when he was called out of time into eternity.

I had but very few opportunities of hearing preaching ; nor had I any one to converse with, or from whom I could obtain help, respecting the salvation of my soul. The few Methodists that were in the neighbourhood were so much afraid of my father that they had not courage to say anything to me. My mind was not a little pained to see those that I so cordially loved in such distress on my account ; and more especially as I well knew that all the opposition and unkind treatment which I met with from them proceeded from ignorance, and that their souls were in as great danger as I saw my own to be. But the words of our Lord sounded in my ears, ' He who loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.' Therefore I clearly saw that I must at all events pursue the one thing needful, let who would be offended with me.

I spent all the time I possibly could in reading the best books I could meet with ; and, through the merciful providence of God, I met with several of those published by Mr. John Bunyan ; and also Mr. Joseph Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted* fell into my hands. These I found profitable. By reading them my mind was much more enlightened and my conscience more awakened. I soon received such a deep sense of my guilty and depraved state of mind that my business became a burden to me, and my father really thought that I should lose my reason, and be

quite ruined. All his hopes concerning me were now blasted, and his designs frustrated; and, considering the violence of his natural temper, it is matter of astonishment to me that he did not use me much worse than he did. For he had been at much expense in fitting me for the business for which he designed me; and, from the time I was awakened, I never used a mathematical instrument more, but laid aside all my books of architecture, and every endeavour to improve myself in gaining a more perfect knowledge of my business. I spent all the time I possibly could in reading divinity, in order to gain a more perfect acquaintance with the things of God. Indeed, I acted in all things as if I had the fullest assurance that the Lord designed me for the ministry; though, at the same time, I had not the most distant thought of any such thing. I now adore the wisdom of God in thus disposing my mind to search after divine knowledge, and in leading me to devote myself wholly to Him; but do not recommend my example as to my business to all, as the Lord cannot have the same designs concerning every one.

This was a time of great and sore trial. I saw with unspeakable sorrow how exceedingly distressed my dear parents were on my account; and yet, notwithstanding my sincere and tender affection for them, my conscience obliged me daily to increase their sorrow, not only in acting in direct opposition to their will as to myself, but in labouring with all my might to bring all the family into the same way. And, blessed

be the name of the Lord, my labour was not in vain. My only brother was awakened, so likewise was my youngest sister's husband, and my eldest sister and her husband. These things, any one may suppose, greatly alarmed my father, as he thought he saw all his family quite ruined; and he laid all the blame upon me, and looked upon me as the cause of all these misfortunes; so that he was almost willing to give me up if he could only preserve the rest of his family; but the Lord had merciful designs concerning them.

My father had often threatened to disown and disinherit me, and had treated me with great severity; but he now tried a different method. He expressed the tenderest regard for me, and said, 'You know these people are exceedingly despised. It will entirely ruin your character to go among them; and, as it is now a time of war, you may be pressed for a soldier, and then I shall be at a good deal of trouble and expense to get you released. You may purchase what books you please; and surely you may gain much more knowledge by reading than by hearing those unlearned and ignorant lay preachers.' I found it hard work to resist the authority and withstand the tender entreaties of an aged and affectionate parent; but, although my heart was ready to bleed, I saw the necessity I was under to obey God, rather than man, even my own father. From this time he watched me so narrowly that it was with great difficulty I could get to the preaching. One Sunday, in particular, I had fully intended to go, but his eye was upon me,

and I had not resolution sufficient to break through. When the time was elapsed, I went into a solitary place, where I thought no one would find me, and there bitterly lamented my case before the Lord. My father soon found me, and asked me to take a walk with him into the fields, it being summer, in order to amuse and divert me; but, alas! my sorrow was too great to be removed or relieved by anything of this sort, but was rather increased than otherwise. We returned in time to attend the service of the church; and in the evening I read, as we generally did on a Sunday night, in the family. As I was very much profited by Alleine's *Alarm* myself, I read in that book this evening. He seemed to approve of what this blessed man of God said; but I plainly perceived he did not understand him. I therefore, with all possible tenderness, ventured to speak a little on the necessity of experiencing these things in our own minds. This could not be endured; he was offended, and said, 'Blessed be God, you are not to be my judge. If you were, I know you would condemn me; and, for your part, I see you are utterly ruined. I have done all in my power to reclaim you, but it is all in vain. I rejoiced at your birth, and I once thought you as hopeful a young man as any in this town; but now I shall have no more comfort in you while I live. Your mother and I are both growing old, and you will bring down our grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. These Methodists are the most bewitching people upon earth: when once a person hears them, there

is no possibility of persuading him to leave them again. You think to make my house a preaching-house when once my head is laid; but I will take care that it shall never be yours. I will leave it to the poor of the parish, before the Methodists shall have anything to do with it. Do pray give up this way, and let me die in peace; and then you may do as you please when I am no more.' Such a speech as this, from an affectionate parent, any one may suppose, was exceedingly affecting. But, although my heart was ready to break, I could only reply, 'When I can see sufficient reason to oblige you in this particular, I certainly will, but not till then.' He said, 'I see it is all in vain; I must give you up. I am bound to pray for you as long as I live; but I see no ground of hope concerning you.' I went to bed with a very sorrowful heart, but fully determined, let what would be the consequence, to seek the salvation of God.

My brother and I now began to take sweet counsel together, and greatly strengthened each other's hands in the Lord. We laboured to oblige our parents in every respect, to the very uttermost of our power, except in this one thing, which concerned the salvation of our souls; but, in my absence, my father so powerfully wrought upon my brother by his tender and affectionate entreaties that he promised him he would hear the Methodists no more. This troubled my mind exceedingly; but I loved him too well to give him up. I persuaded him to go along with me to preaching once more; and the word took deep

hold on his heart, and from that time he never looked back, but was faithful unto death. We frequently prayed together in our bed-chamber, and my mother got upon the stairs to hear us, and desired to join in prayer with us. Soon after this my father desired to do the same; but as I had not then found a sense of the love of God, I had not sufficient courage to pray when he was present. His mind had been variously exercised: sometimes he thought he would use violence, and, at all events, prevent my hearing these men any more: then he thought, 'But what if he should be in the right? then how dreadful would it be!' I had bought the Rev. John Wesley's Sermons, and he read some of them. This gave him a more favourable opinion of the doctrines of the Methodists, and softened his mind in some degree: but the minister of the parish, being a notorious drunkard, and a determined enemy to the Methodists, beginning to fear he should lose all our family, gathered up all the idle stories he could hear of respecting these despised people; and there were great plenty of such in those days. These he brought to my father, and thereby created me a great deal of trouble; but, by the mercy of God, I was generally enabled to search out the truth, and confute him, so that his bad designs were brought to nothing. And this wrought together for good in the end.

Still, however, my father was so exceedingly troubled respecting me that we had no peace in our family, and I thought we should be obliged to part after all. As I could not fully open my

mind to him, on account of the warmth of his natural temper, I was determined to write to him. I endeavoured to describe the state of my own mind, and showed him the extreme danger I apprehended myself to be in. Reasoning the case with him to this purpose : ' What worse am I, in any respect, for hearing the Methodists ? Am I disobedient to you, or my mother, in anything save this one ? Do I neglect any part of my business ? Must not every one give an account of himself to God ? Doth the law condemn any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth ? Why, then, do you condemn the Methodists, whom you have never heard, and know very little of ? If you will only hear them three times, and prove from the Scriptures that their doctrine is false, I will hear them no more ; but, if you will not, my conscience obliges me to hear them, till it shall please God to convince me of my mistake by some other means.' He seriously considered the contents of my letter ; and, being exceedingly desirous to reclaim me, he consented to go. The first he heard was that truly simple and upright man of God, Mr. Matthew Watson, of Leeds. He was not a little surprised to hear him pray and preach so remarkably well extempore ; and was pleased, rather than much profited. The next was Mr. Benjamin Beanland, who was an excellent preacher ; but he happened to say something which my father thought reflected upon the clergy : this he could not bear, and accordingly was so highly offended that he would not so

much as take his hat off during the whole service. The third he heard was Mr. John Pool, whom he liked very well, and was willing to hear a fourth, who happened to be Mr. John Hosmer, whom he greatly approved of; but still he was not convinced, though he could not disprove their doctrine. However, he began to pray that the Lord would be pleased to show him the good and the right way. And one Sunday morning while he was earnestly crying to God in the stable, where he thought no one could hear him, divine light was communicated to his mind: his conscience was deeply awakened, and he was brought into the bitterest distress; insomuch that he trembled exceedingly, and even roared for the very disquietness of his soul, being ashamed and confounded, so that he could hardly hope for mercy. On this memorable day, my soul was, in a sense, brought out of prison, as I had from this time full liberty to attend upon all divine ordinances without interruption. Very soon after, also, both myself and all the family, eight in number, joined the society. And in the year 1759 my father even invited the preachers to his house, where they have been freely entertained ever since. In so doing, he prevented me from making his house a preaching-house, as he had before said; for he made it one himself.

It is well known that particular persons may be very differently affected, when under the awakening influences of the Spirit of God. At this time, although I was deeply sensible of my lost estate, and filled with the most intense desire after

salvation, yet I laboured under the intolerable burden of a hard and insensible heart. I should have been glad to have wept my very life away; but, alas! I only mourned because I could not mourn as I wished. My soul seemed shut out from the presence of God; I had no access to His throne, no comfortable freedom in prayer, but was as if surrounded with clouds and darkness, and burdened with spiritual death. I was now tempted to think that if I had been openly wicked, I might have been brought much sooner to the saving knowledge of God; as then, I supposed, I should have experienced deeper repentance, and, through feeling a heavier load of guilt upon my conscience, should have prayed the more earnestly for pardoning mercy. Hence I was ready to question whether it would not be the best way to turn back for a while, and drink in iniquity like water, that I might return and repent more effectually! This, however, I could not do, because sin was exceeding bitter to me, and I abhorred it as the accursed thing that was the cause of all my trouble: besides, I saw that if I should sin wilfully, divine grace might justly be withheld from me, and I might die in sin, and perish for ever. Very seasonably, Bunyan's book, termed *Heart's Ease in Heart Trouble*, fell into my hands, where I met with this very temptation stated and answered. I heartily praised the Lord for this word in season. The snare of the devil was broken, and I saw the state of my soul more clearly than ever.

At this time the Lord greatly revived His work

among us. As we now had regular preaching in my father's house, many of our neighbours came to hear, and several were awakened, and joined the society. This was matter of great thankfulness to me; but still I was not brought into the liberty of the children of God. I therefore cried earnestly to Him, that He would graciously deliver me from that spiritual insensibility which I laboured under; and He condescended to grant my request. I went to a village called Barwick to hear that heart-searching preacher, Mr. Hosmer[1]; and the mighty power of God was present. All on a sudden my heart was broken in pieces, my spirit was deeply wounded, my head was as waters, and my eyes fountains of tears; and, before I was aware, I was crying aloud with an exceeding bitter cry. The trouble and anguish of spirit I then felt far exceeds all description. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in my flesh, and the poison of them drank up my spirits; and yet I could heartily praise the Lord, while in the deepest distress, because He had answered my long-continued prayer. I now sought the Lord with my whole heart, and constantly attended all the ordinances of God, both by night and day. I frequently walked eight or ten miles to hear the word preached, and constantly walked six miles to meet my class. I have gone over Blackmoor, so called, many a dark night, quite alone, and when it has been knee-deep in snow. Such were the desires which

[1] Mr. Hosmer became an itinerant in 1758. He afterwards settled in Sunderland as a surgeon, but continued to preach. He died at York in 1780 (Lyth's *Methodism in York*, p. 140).

the Lord gave me that nothing appeared difficult, nothing hard, that I had to pass through. So deep a sense had I, so keen a conviction, of my deplorable condition, as a fallen, guilty, depraved sinner, that I had no rest in my bones by reason of my sin. Like Ephraim of old, 'I bemoaned myself,' and, like David, 'roared for the disquietness of my soul.' Any one might have read the distress of my mind in my countenance. The things of this world were made bitter to me, and my lawful business became a burden. The love of this world, and all desire of making a figure in life, or of conforming to the customs or fashions of mankind, got their death's wound in my mind at that time, and have never recovered strength to this day, and I am persuaded never will.

One morning, as I was walking in the fields, in the deepest sorrow, being ready to conclude that there was no help, no mercy, for me, as, notwithstanding all my best and most powerful efforts, I was a poor prisoner still, the Lord was pleased to comfort my drooping heart by darting these encouraging words into my mind: 'Wait thou the Lord's pleasure, be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart.' Hereby I was refreshed for the present, and was afterwards enabled to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God. About this time a neighbour of ours was said to be brought to enjoy a sense of the love of God under the third gospel sermon which he had heard. This I at first thought impossible, till I heard Mr. James Oddie give public thanks on his

account the next morning. I did not consider that 'one day with the Lord is as a thousand years,' and that He can do a great work in a little time. This poor man had lived many years without God in the world, but seeing me and my brother go so constantly past his house to the preaching, he was cut to the heart, and thought, 'What unwearied pains do these young lads take to get to heaven, and I take none at all!' From this he began to inquire what he must do to be saved; and, like many others, took refuge among the Methodists. After this he walked with God many years, and died in great peace, while we were commending his soul to God in solemn prayer. The consideration of his sudden conversion deeply affected my mind. I returned home, and retired to my bed-chamber; but here I had not room sufficient to vent my extreme distress. I therefore went into the barn, where I thought no one could either see or hear me. Here I wept and prayed, and roared aloud, my distress being greater than I was well able to bear; yet I was not without hope, but had an earnest expectation that, unworthy as I was, the Lord would be gracious unto me. But I was not so private as I supposed: I found that my brother was in another part of the barn, in as deep distress as myself: and my father and mother soon heard our cries, and came to see what was the matter. My sister and her husband came also; so that we were now six in number, all in the same state of mind, and in the deepest distress. Had any of our neighbours either seen or heard us, they would

certainly have thought that we were all beside ourselves. It was, indeed, an affecting sight; and the more so, as we had no one to assist us in any degree, either by prayer or Christian counsel. But still we were none of us delivered: 'the children were brought to the birth, but there was not strength to bring forth.'

I sought the Lord as if there had not been a person upon earth who wanted salvation but myself. I could not, indeed, but heartily desire that all mankind might be saved; yet I could not rejoice when I heard of different persons being brought into liberty, while I myself remained in bondage; as I plainly saw, if all the world were converted to God, and I were not, it would signify nothing to me. I went to the house of God, time after time, weary and heavy laden, yet in full expectation of meeting with my Saviour there; and many times my soul was, as I thought, just ready to lay hold on Him, but unbelieving fears prevented me. And yet I am satisfied that there was nothing which I believed to be contrary to the will of God that I had not given up. I was perfectly willing, and I had almost said infinitely desirous, to be saved upon God's own terms, and in His own way; and yet I could not believe. So that, after more than forty years' experience of the mercy and love of God, I am constrained to believe that faith is the gift and the work of God, and that the soul must be under a peculiar influence of the Divine Spirit in the act of believing. The infinitely wise and blessed God is perfectly acquainted with the deceitfulness of the

human heart, and well knoweth that, in the general, what we obtain at an easy rate we too often set but little value upon. Therefore, that we may highly prize and properly improve His grace when we obtain it, He gives us deeply to feel the want of it, and, in a good measure, to know the worth of it, before He imparts it. Yea, and He gives us to taste the gall and wormwood, the bitterness of sin, and makes us heartily sick of it, before He delivers us from it. I adore His sacred name that He took this method with me: He dug deep, and laid the foundation sure, and hath carried on the building to this day!

The time of my deliverance now drew near. I went to a neighbouring village to hear Mr. Hosmer. It was a new place, and many came from various parts to hear the word of God. An extraordinary influence attended the word that night. There was a mighty shaking among the dry bones. Mr. Hosmer preached upon the words of Isa. xli. 10: 'Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee,' &c. These precious words were applied to my honoured father's mind by the Spirit of God, while Mr. Hosmer was reading them, and he was brought into marvellous light and liberty. Here I cannot but admire the wisdom and goodness of God, in the methods He takes to 'hide pride from man,' and 'that he who glorieth may glory in the Lord.' My dear father, who had long been so great a hindrance to me, was brought into the favour and family of God before me: the consideration of this constrained

me to praise God, and yet it greatly increased my trouble. I kneeled before the Lord throughout the whole service, and for a considerable time after it was over, weeping, trembling, and crying to the Lord for mercy ; but deliverance was not yet. Mr. Hosmer, in tender compassion to the souls whom he saw in such deep distress, appointed a meeting for extraordinary prayer the next morning, which was Sunday, March 16, 1760. I went to that meeting deeply distressed, yet with a full expectation of finding the salvation of God. It appeared to me that I had no hope beyond that meeting ; that if I did not find the Lord there, I never should find Him ; nothing but clouds and thick darkness appeared to me beyond that meeting. Before the service began, a person who tenderly pitied me said, 'Fear not : the Lord graciously visited your father last night, and you will find the blessing this morning. You have been an instrument in His hand in bringing all the family into the way, and He will not leave you behind.' These words afforded me no comfort, as I knew very well I must not expect salvation because I had done something good, but wholly by grace, through faith in the blood of Christ. The service no sooner began than the Lord was wonderfully present. A person, who had been ten years by the way-side, was brought into liberty, and walked therein for many years, till he finished his earthly course with joy. I soon heard another, whose voice I well knew, cry for mercy ; and his heaviness was soon turned into joy, and he has retained his confidence

in God to this day. I was upon my knees in the middle of the room, and, if possible, in greater anguish of spirit than ever : surely ' the sorrows of death compassed me about, and the pains of hell got hold upon me ; I found trouble and heaviness. Then called I upon the name of the Lord ; O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul.' He heard me from His holy hill ; He spoke, and I heard His voice. He graciously applied that blessed word to my mind, Isa. xliii. 1, ' Thou art Mine.' In a moment I was perfectly delivered from all my guilty fears ; my deep sorrow, my extreme distress, was entirely gone. The peace of God flowed into my conscience, and the love of God was shed abroad in my heart abundantly ; my whole soul was filled with serious, sacred, heavenly joy ; yea, I triumphed in the God of my salvation. The kingdom of heaven was opened in my mind in that happy hour, and the light of God's countenance shone with resplendent brightness upon me. I did not know that the words applied to my mind were in the Scriptures ; but this did not at all damp my joy in the Lord, as I was well assured they were the voice of God to me. But very soon afterwards my brother told me I might find them in the Bible ; and I rose early one morning, and, after prayer, opened my Bible upon that very passage. This was a kind of sealing of the promise to my soul.

The deliverance which the Lord wrought for me was so great, and the change in my mind was so extraordinary, that I never could doubt of my acceptance with God through Christ to this day.

My convictions of sin had been so deep, painful, and of such long continuance, that, when deliverance came, it was not only the more welcome, but also the more clear. And as I had been favoured with so clear a manifestation of the love of God to my soul, no one need to wonder that ever since I first acted in a public capacity in the church I have been led to bear my testimony to the absolute necessity of every one's enjoying 'the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins'; especially as the Scriptures are so remarkably clear and express upon the subject.

Having found salvation myself, I felt an intense desire that others should enjoy the same unspeakable blessing. I therefore began a meeting for prayer on Sunday evenings, and many of our neighbours attended. As we had no one who could give a word of exhortation, I sometimes read a sermon, and sometimes the Homilies of the Established Church. These had not been heard of for a long time, and therefore were quite new; and the inhabitants, being one and all church people, were very willing to hear them. The minister of the parish, being, as I said before, a determined enemy to true religion, was highly offended, and laboured with all his might to prejudice the people against me. But he lost his bad labour, and was so provoked by the people turning Methodists, that he left the town. I also read select passages from *Burkitt on the New Testament*; and afterwards I took God's own book, read part of a chapter, and endeavoured to explain it. The people bore with my weakness,

constantly attended at all opportunities, and my feeble endeavours were crowned with some degree of success.

About six weeks after I found peace with God, Mr. Hosmer divided our little society into two classes, and made me the leader of one of them. This was a heavy cross, but I did not dare to refuse taking it up. The first time I met the class, I was brought into a much higher state of grace than before. From that time I enjoyed the abiding witness of the Spirit; my mind was constantly stayed upon God, and I enjoyed uninterrupted communion with Him. For many years after this, no evil temper, unholy desire, or carnal affection, had any place in my soul; but I was favoured with the continued presence of God.

On December 28, 1760, my dear brother was brought into liberty. He had for many months been deeply and painfully exercised, and had earnestly sought the Lord with strong cries and many tears; but his soul was now brought out of prison. Eight of us had joined the society at the same time, and now my happiness was complete; for my elder sister's husband also found the Lord soon after my brother, and we all rejoiced in God our Saviour together.

I was now exceedingly pressed to visit the neighbouring societies, and give them a word of exhortation. This I at first absolutely refused, as I thought myself utterly unqualified for anything of that kind; but in 1761 Mr. John Johnson, being stationed in the Leeds circuit, and, from

the first time he saw me, being persuaded the Lord had called me to preach His gospel, followed me with continual advice, persuasions, and even threatenings of the divine displeasure if I would not obey the call of God. He even put me into the Plan among the local preachers before I had ever preached at all. This was a sore trial to me; and, to avoid it, I had thoughts of leaving my own neighbourhood, and going where I was not known. However, after much prayer, when the time appointed came, I went to Horsforth, the place appointed, and there attempted to preach upon John iii. 16: 'God so loved the world,' &c. I was also put down in the Plan to preach at Chapeltown the same day; but was at a loss for a text. I retired, and while I was pleading with the Lord in prayer, His condescending mercy opened Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, to me in such a manner as I shall never forget. From this time I continued preaching occasionally till August, 1762, when the general Conference was held at Leeds. Mr. Johnson[1] earnestly pressed me to attend it, which I did; and, without my knowledge, he recommended me as a candidate for travelling as a preacher. When Mr. Wesley asked me if I were willing to give up myself to the work, I trembled exceedingly; for I was far from being satisfied that this was the will of the Lord concerning me: however, as I seriously believed that they were a body of men that were under the divine influence, I replied, 'I am deeply sensible

[1] 'He acted the part of a father to me on all occasions, so that I shall for ever have cause to praise the Lord on his account.'—*Pawson.*

of my own weakness and insufficiency for so great a work; but if you and the brethren think good to make a trial of me, I give up myself to you.' Accordingly I was sent into the York circuit, with Peter Jaco, John and Nicholas Manners, Richard Henderson, and James Cotty.

It was a very grievous trial to my dear parents and Christian friends to part with me, as they feared that, when I was gone, the work of God among them would come to nothing. But the Lord took care of this: I was no sooner removed, but He raised up my brother, who filled up my place well for many years, even to the time of his death. I had met a few people at Harewood, who were left as sheep without a shepherd; but how wonderful are the ways of God! Many of the inhabitants, when they heard that I was gone out to preach the gospel, said if I would come and preach there, they would come and hear me. I did so, and they came accordingly; and from that time there has been preaching in that town, and many precious souls have been savingly brought to God, and some have died happy in His love. I entered upon my circuit with a single eye, having nothing in view but the honour of God in the salvation of souls; and such was the labour and the many and great hardships the preachers had then to endure, that I rejoiced in hope I should soon be worn out, finish my course, and be happy with my God for ever. The work of the Lord prospered much in several places of the circuit, which was very large, taking us eight weeks to go once through it. The people treated

me with the tenderest affection, and the Lord condescended to crown my feeble labours with a blessing. I did not labour in vain, or spend my strength for nought. Yet I had many trials; for in several places we were greatly disturbed with mobs, especially at Beverley.

I was not, however, yet satisfied respecting my call to the ministry, as I was not always favoured with that freedom of mind and enlargement of heart in preaching which are so desirable. And, being naturally of an exceedingly self-diffident spirit, and having sometimes to preach where there were local preachers who were, I supposed, much wiser and better qualified than myself, I seriously thought of giving up travelling at the close of the year. Mr. J. Manners, who acted the part of a tender father to me, hearing of this, said with great affection, 'I suppose you doubt concerning your call to the ministry.' I answered, 'I do.' He replied, 'Why, you have no more cause to doubt of that than I have.' This was a word in season to me. I was sure that he was a much better judge of such things than I was; and, as I well knew him to be a wise and holy man, his speaking in such strong terms concerning my call helped me not a little.

Being encouraged by this faithful servant of God, I went to the Conference in company with that amiable man, Mr. Richard Henderson. This was the first time I ever was in London, and the Conference was held in Spitalfields Chapel. We had no money matters to settle in these days; but after the preachers' characters were examined,

and they were stationed for the next year, all the time was taken up in speaking upon spiritual subjects. This was the only time I ever saw that faithful servant of God, the Welsh apostle, Mr. Howell Harris.

At this Conference some of the preachers began to call in question the power Mr. Wesley exercised over them and the societies. But Mr. Harris pleaded his cause effectually, and among other things said, 'If Mr. Wesley should at any time abuse his power, who will weep for him, if his own children will not?' These simple words had an astonishing effect upon the minds of the preachers; they were all in tears on every side, and gave up the matter entirely.

At this Conference in 1763 the Preachers' Fund was first begun. It was said that several of the preachers were growing old, and asked, what should they do for support; if they should live to be past their labour? And, as others of them had families, what would become of their widows and children, if their husbands and fathers should die, and leave them behind? Being young and inexperienced, I was utterly amazed at hearing this. For I thought that every Christian minister had an entire confidence in God, respecting temporal as well as spiritual things, so as to be perfectly free from all care as to what might befall either himself or family. However, although Mr. Wesley did not greatly approve of what was proposed, as he always thought it worldly, and not Christian prudence, to provide for a rainy day, yet he consented to it, and the Fund was begun.

I had now an opportunity to receive the holy sacrament among the children of God. And to see the large and deeply-serious congregations that attended the chapels, the uncommon number of communicants, their devout behaviour, and the order in which the whole service was conducted, was highly pleasing to me. Oh how divinely pleasant, and how truly profitable, is it to wait upon God in His holy ordinances, when He is present in the power of His Spirit, and they are conducted according to His own appointment!

As our Conferences in these days only lasted from Tuesday morning till Friday noon, my stay in London was very short; it being thought very wrong for the preachers to stay in town at all after the Conference was concluded. I was appointed for the Haworth circuit, with William Fugill, Paul Greenwood, and Daniel Bumstead. Upon coming into the circuit we found all the people mourning the loss of that eminently faithful servant of God, the Rev. William Grimshaw, who had died in April that year. Many, very many had, I am inclined to think, put that excellent man in God's place, and seriously thought that the prosperity of the work entirely depended upon him. Hence they thought, 'Now he is gone, all is over with us; we shall surely come to nothing.' God, we know, is a jealous God, and will not have us to ascribe that to any creature which we ought to ascribe to Him alone. As the people, I am satisfied, did this, the Lord called His faithful servant away; and, it was very

remarkable, the work prospered wonderfully; and I believe there was much more good done in that circuit in that one year than had been done in seven years before that time. In Keighley also, and the neighbourhood, there was a glorious revival of the work of God, such as no one then living could remember to have seen. It seemed as if the word of God could carry all before it, and men, women, and children were converted on all sides.

When the year was expired, I attended the Conference in Bristol, in August, 1764. Having been very much united to Mr. Bumstead[1] the preceding year, and he being appointed for Norwich, he requested Mr. Wesley to let me go along with him, which was granted. This proved a distressing trial to me, as I looked upon myself as a very improper person for such a place. My mind was painfully exercised, but was much relieved by hearing the Rev. Mr. Madan upon 1 Cor. i. 30: 'Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus,' &c. Twelve clergymen attended that Conference, whose principal business was to convince us that we ought not to preach in any parish where there was a gospel minister. Some of them were much more moderate than others. One of them said, 'If a layman be called of God to preach the gospel, then he has as good a right to do it as any clergyman whatever.' Mr. Madan could

[1] Daniel Bumstead, a native of Colchester, began to preach in 1762, and was for many years remarkably successful. He afterwards left the itinerancy on account of his health. Mr. Pawson preached his funeral sermon in City Road Chapel in 1797 (see *Methodist Magazine*, January, 1798).

not agree to this, but said he should not dare to forbid such a person.

The Conference being over, I set forward with my dear friend Mr. Bumstead, and spent the Lord's day in London, where I preached for the first time in Snowsfields Chapel, which was just then built; and from thence we proceeded to Colchester, among a very affectionate but exceedingly poor people; and from thence went on to Norwich. Here we had very large congregations, with abundance of persecution, both in the city and country. To break the windows, disturb our meetings, and abuse our persons, was their constant practice, especially during the winter; so that we were frequently obliged to complain to the magistrates: but they granted us very little relief. None of them would go a step farther than they were obliged, for fear of being persecuted themselves. I spent part of this year in Colchester, and we began to preach at a small town called Nayland. Here the mob was exceedingly violent. One night they supplied themselves with large oxen-horns, and sounded them to such a degree that when I spoke as loud as I possibly could, I could not hear the sound of my own voice, nor could I satisfy myself by any means whether I had any voice or not. I was obliged to give over; and having to return to Colchester that night, our friends thought it would not be safe for me to take horse at the door, but to walk through the town, and they would meet me at the bridge with the horse. I did so, and the mob made a way, and I walked

quietly through them to the end of the town; but as my horse was not come, I was obliged to wait a considerable time, when the mob closed me in on every side. But the hand of God was upon them, and not one of them was suffered to hurt me. I was astonished at the goodness of God. They neither cast dirt nor stones, nor attempted to throw me into the river, nor do anything of the kind, although they seemed quite prepared for any mischief their bad master might set them upon. I found an inexpressible tranquillity in my own mind all the time, having no sort of fear as to what they might do. The poor people who came along with me from Colchester did not escape so well. They abused them in the most shameful and cruel manner, and some of them did not recover for a considerable time. I was obliged to appear at the quarter-sessions the next day, where the Rev. Dr. Tanner was chairman.[1] He did not appear to encourage persecution, but acted the part of an upright magistrate towards us; and finding that we had done nothing contrary to the laws of our country, he desired us to forgive what was past, and he would take care, for the time to come, that we should not be molested. I told him that we were far from seeking any sort of revenge: those people had certainly treated us in a very improper, not to say in a very cruel, manner; but since he was so kind as to promise us protection for the time to come, we should willingly forgive all that was past.

[1] 'A clergyman belonging to the cathedral in Canterbury.'

We had an extraordinary prospect at Yarmouth this year of much good being done. But one of our leaders, turning Calvinist,[1] divided the society, and our pleasing prospect was entirely blasted. It is truly astonishing to think of the confusion and discord this occasioned. The unhappy effects of that breach have been but too sensibly felt by the pious people in that town to this day. We also began preaching at Lowestoft that year. Here we had mobs and tumults constantly; but the Lord gave us and the people strength according to our day; a society was raised, and a work was then begun which has been carried on to the present time.

I had abundant reason to praise the Lord for my fellow labourer. We were of one heart and one soul. We cordially loved each other, and on all occasions acted in unity and harmony. The people in general saw this, and it had a very blessed effect upon them; as it utterly destroyed all party spirit, and put an end, in a great measure, to evil speaking. It surely is a great happiness when the preachers in any particular circuit really love one another; for as this will naturally tend to increase their own happiness, it will also greatly help their usefulness among the people. I found Mr. Bumstead a truly upright man, much devoted to God, zealous for His glory, and diligent in His work. A more cordial or faithful friend I never met with, nor one who, I believe, was more unreservedly or more disinterestedly

[1] Mr. Benjamin Worship, a young lawyer, who began a new society in the town (see Wesley's *Journal*, January 14, 1766, and December 7, 1767).

given up to God and His work. It was a great pity he ever left the public work: he certainly went out of the divine order, and I am inclined to think suffered not a little in his mind on that account.

The year being expired, my dear friend and I set forward to the Conference, which was held in Manchester in 1765. On our way we were detained at Newark-upon-Trent on the Lord's day. Being obliged to take up our abode at an inn, we were rather at a loss, as we knew of no religious people in that town. We walked into the stable, and I asked the ostler if there were any Dissenters in that town. He said he did not know, but there wanted something to reform the people, for they were very wicked. I replied, 'You say you do not know whether there are any Dissenters: then you have not lived here long? Pray where do you come from?' He replied, 'From Malton, in Yorkshire.' I asked, 'Pray do you know Mr. Wilson, of Malton?' 'Yes,' said the man; 'and I know you, too. I have heard you preach there.'

We walked into the churchyard in search of serious people. I thought I saw a person who looked more solid than ordinary, and walked towards him. The man looked rather earnestly upon me, and said, 'Pray, sir, are you upon a journey?' I answered, 'Yes.' 'So am I,' said he; 'but pray, sir, are you not a preacher?' I answered, 'I am.' 'A Methodist preacher?' said he. I replied, 'Yes.' 'Pray what is your name?' I answered, 'My name is Pawson.'

'John Pawson,' he replied: 'I have heard you preach at Northallerton. I was looking about for some serious person, as I am quite a stranger in this place.' How condescendingly kind is our gracious God! We were looking about for a religious person, the honest stranger was doing the same, and the Lord granted our joint desire, and brought us together. After the service of the church, we returned to our inn. I soon observed that the waiter was remarkably attentive to all we said; and as our conversation was wholly upon religion, I perceived that he took particular notice of it. In a while, he ventured to speak, and said, 'Gentlemen, we have a very good church in this town, and a tolerably good minister too, if you choose to go.' I replied, 'Yes, we have been at church this forenoon: we think it right to attend public worship at all opportunities. Have you any religious people in this town?' 'Very few, indeed, sir,' said he; 'and the few there are, they call them Methodists. I know of only one woman, and myself, and they call us Methodists, although I never saw one in my life that I know of; but I have been led to think they are very good people, because they are so much hated and despised by the wicked.' I replied, 'I am inclined to think that you have formed a right judgement of them: I believe the Methodists in general fear the Lord, and endeavour to honour and obey Him.' 'I have heard much,' added he, 'of Messrs. Whitefield and Wesley; but I am surprised that they should preach out of the church. And, likewise, they

preach without a book : I wonder how the people can understand them.' I replied, 'You know our Lord preached upon a mountain, and St. Paul in the house of one Justus, and in the school of one Tyrannus. And as to their preaching extemporary, I suppose the people may understand them the better, as they adapt their discourses to the capacities as well as the states of their hearers. I am a Methodist preacher, and so is my fellow traveller. I preached in the street at Norwich only last Lord's day.' 'Are you, sir?' said the man. 'I have lived seven years at this house, and I never remember to have seen a religious person call here before, except the Bishop of Durham : he appeared to be a serious man.' It is impossible to describe the delight this honest young man appeared to take in our company. He told us his experience, and how he spent his time. It was evident that the Lord had graciously visited his soul, though he had never heard a gospel sermon in his life, and had only the Bible, the Common Prayer-Book, and Milton's *Paradise Lost* to read. He spent all the time he could possibly spare with us, willingly joined us in prayer, and would needs treat us with a bottle of wine, but this we refused. We thought it not a little remarkable that, strangers as we were in the place, the Lord should, in so particular a manner, direct us to, it seems, the only religious persons in the town.

In our way to Manchester we called at Thorner, and I had the happiness to find all my father's

family in good health, and happy in the enjoyment of God. I attended the Conference, where all the affairs of our Connexion were settled in great peace and harmony; and I was appointed for the Birstall circuit, along with Mr. John Murlin,[1] a holy, upright, good-natured man, and Mr. Parson Greenwood, an Israelite indeed. This was a happy and a prosperous year, and we extended our borders considerably. Mr. Wesley had withdrawn the preaching from Huddersfield for several years, at the request of the Rev. Mr. Venn, who thought himself sufficient for that parish; but we now began preaching there again, and by this means a way was opened into the mountains above, where the people in general were little better than heathens, ignorant and wicked to a high degree. The Lord hath since then wrought a wonderful change among them. Several chapels have been built in that part, and many souls savingly converted to God. When I was preaching at Thong, the minister of Honley sent the constable to take me up: he happened to come in just as I was taking my text. The man was so surprised to find that I took a text out of the Bible, that he resolved he would stay and hear me out: he did so, and was convinced of the truth, turned to the Lord, found salvation, lived a few years happy in the love of God, and died in peace. So far was Satan disappointed of his hope in sending the poor man to the preaching!

In the year 1766 the Conference was held in

[1] See Vol. ii. of this series, p. 156.

Leeds, when I was appointed to the Manchester circuit along with Mr. Jaco, Mr. Paul Greenwood, and Mr. John Allen. We were as the heart of one man. I am inclined to think that there never were four men more closely united than we were. Our circuit was very extensive, as it took in Stockport, Macclesfield, Congleton, Newcastle, Warrington, Liverpool, Bolton, and many other towns. This was a very happy and a prosperous year; but in March the Lord was pleased to call home His faithful servant, Paul Greenwood, who died of a fever at Warrington. This was a distressing trial to me. He was a truly apostolical man, and exceedingly beloved by the people. He was one of the most sincere and upright men I ever was acquainted with, had travelled about twenty years, and had been a blessing wherever he laboured. I never saw a man more universally lamented by the people than he was. I preached his funeral sermon in deep sorrow, yet with uncommon liberty, from 1 Cor. xv. 57: 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory,' &c. Many souls were added to the church of God in the course of this year.

The next Conference was held in London, which I attended; and was ordered to return to Manchester along with Mr. John, afterwards Dr., Whitehead, Mr. John Pool, and Mr. William Fugill. I had the care of this very large circuit upon me, being appointed the superintendent, or, as the term then was, assistant preacher; so called, from assisting Mr. Wesley in watching over the societies, and keeping up a proper

discipline among them.[1] I endeavoured to give up myself unreservedly to the Lord, and my strength was proportioned to my day. I was not so happy with my fellow labourers as the last year, except with Mr. Whitehead : he was then an excellent preacher, and highly esteemed by the people ; and that friendship between us was begun this year, which continued to his death, and I am persuaded will be renewed in eternity.

At the conclusion of this year, I found we had added four hundred and thirty souls to the society, and there was good reason to believe that above two hundred had found a clear sense of the love of God. Praise the Lord, O my soul, for His abundant goodness ! This was the first circuit that I ever was stationed in for two years. By this means I had gained a more perfect acquaintance with the people, and was abundantly more closely united to them ; but, alas, while in this world, every pleasure has something of pain attending it. My strong affection for them made it the harder to part from them, so that I suffered not a little when Providence called me away. But ' we are only strangers and sojourners upon earth, as all our fathers were.'

In 1768 our Conference was held in Bristol, where all was peace, harmony, and love. I was appointed for the Wednesbury circuit, along with my faithful friend Mr. John Allen, and Mr. Isaac Waldron. The work of the Lord greatly prospered in our hands ; we planted the gospel in

[1] See a story of a conversion at Macclesfield, Wesley's *Journal*, June 17, 1767.

fourteen new places, and we were obliged to call out that excellent young man, Mr. Samuel Wells. A more upright creature I never knew. He walked with God, diligently laboured in his vineyard a few years, and then died full of faith and the love of God. In the strength of his years he was called to his reward: surely the judgements of our God are a great deep! For some time after I came into this circuit, I was in some degree of heaviness. My soul mourned the loss of my Christian friends. I had not fully learned to enjoy the society of those I loved, while the Lord permitted them to remain with me, or me with them, and, when He called, then cheerfully to give them up, and go where He appointed; rejoicing in hope of meeting them again, where pain and parting are no more for ever.

In the course of this year I had such a deep sense of my own weakness and unprofitableness as led me to think that the Lord would lay me entirely aside. But I afterwards learned that, even while my mind was under this cloud, the Lord crowned my feeble labours with success, and made the word a blessing to many. When this painful trial was over, I laboured with great satisfaction, and the Lord added to His church this year three hundred souls. Here it was that I first became acquainted with one of the most amiable families I had ever known—Mr. Eden's in Gloucestershire. It was a heaven upon earth to be there. They were so unreservedly devoted to God, so simple of heart, so lively and zealous in the service of a good Master, that, as I

could not but rejoice when I had the prospect of spending a day with them, so I never parted from them but with a degree of reluctance.

In 1769 our Conference was held in Leeds. It was at this time that we first sent preachers to America. Several of the brethren offered to go, if I would go along with them; but I did not see that the Lord called me to leave my native country, or to lay so heavy a cross upon my affectionate and now aged parents; and therefore I was appointed for London. This was exceedingly painful to me, as I judged myself wholly unqualified for so high a station; but Mr. Wesley would have it so, and I submitted, only requesting that my beloved friend, Mr. Allen, might go along with me, which was readily granted. Here I found I was to preach to a wise and deeply-experienced people. The consideration of this led me earnestly to pray that the Lord would grant me that wisdom and grace which I clearly saw I should stand in need of, in order that I might be made useful to them. I found my mind powerfully drawn to give up myself wholly to God; and from the fullest conviction that the religion of Jesus Christ is the happiest and best thing in the world, I resolved, in the strength of the Lord, to follow Him fully, and to spend and be spent in His work.

I entered upon my labours with a lively expectation that the Lord would give me strength according to my day; and I had infinite cause to praise His sacred name that He favoured me with freedom of mind, in declaring His truth

to the people; and I had the satisfaction to know that my labours were generally acceptable, and attended with a blessing. Here I got acquainted with several intelligent and experienced Christians, who had been members of the society from the beginning. Their conversation was very profitable to me; and I was not only quickened to greater diligence, but greatly encouraged to 'press towards the mark for the prize of my high calling.'

In the month of October I received the affecting news that my honoured father was dangerously ill. I therefore went down to my native place, and found him exceedingly weak, and not likely to live long. He bore his affliction with steady patience and entire resignation to the will of God. He was exceedingly thankful that he had lived to see all his family savingly converted, made happy in God, and living in love and unity one with another. With tears of gratitude on this account, he said, 'I think I may die with such a degree of peace as few have done before.' Some time before he died he had a discovery which affected him exceedingly. He saw (in such a manner as words cannot fully express) into what a holy and happy state the Lord brought him when he was first justified; what great privileges and unspeakable blessings he then enjoyed. But he painfully saw that he had not stood fast in that state of liberty into which he was brought; but, by giving way to his natural temper, which was exceedingly warm, he had lost ground, had grieved the Holy Spirit,

and dishonoured his God. He saw that, although he had been remarkably diligent in attending all divine ordinances (and I believe very few ever excelled him in this), yet he had often been a formal worshipper, and had too much substituted the means in the place of the end ; so that he had made little or no progress in the life and power of religion. This discovery occasioned the deepest sorrow, and led him to the closest self-examination. He freely opened his distressed mind to me. I said, ' The Lord hath made this discovery to humble, but not to discourage, you. He certainly designs that you should return to Him with your whole heart, that He may heal every wound, restore to you the joy of His salvation, and establish you with His free Spirit.' He was greatly encouraged, but never satisfied till the Lord gave him a clear sense of His love. From this time he was as a little child ; his whole soul was renewed in the image of God ; and although Satan sorely tempted him on account of his past unfaithfulness, yet he held fast his confidence in God to the last.

He attended the preaching till a few days before his death ; he would be led down to the chapel, as long as he was able to walk, between two of us. In this he was an example to all who knew him. He said to me one day, ' Do you think we shall know each other in heaven ? ' I answered, ' Yes, certainly : heaven will perfect, not impair, our knowledge.' He replied, with inexpressible joy, ' Oh, how shall I rejoice to see any of you follow me to that happy place ! '

I was with him the whole day on which he died. He said very little, but seemed to be wholly engaged with God in prayer; and my mind was so deeply affected that I could say very little to him. Towards the evening I asked him how he found the state of his mind. He replied, with all the strength he had, 'I feel no doubt or fear; I find I can pray always.' I said, 'Then you find your mind stayed upon God?' He answered, 'Oh yes, firmly.' I said, 'It will not be long before you shall be with Him.' He answered, 'I do not care how soon.' A little after this a few Christian friends came in, and we joined in prayer with him, and solemnly commended his departing spirit to the God of love. As he was now exceedingly deaf, I asked him if he heard us. He replied, 'Oh yes, and I felt too: I am quite happy.' After this he only said, 'I long to part'; and then quietly fell asleep in my arms, without a sigh or groan, or any struggle at all, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, having lived in the married state forty-seven years.

Thus died my most affectionate father; and by his death, I trust, I learned more fully than before how indispensably necessary it is to maintain our ground against our own natural temper. If we do not, we surely plant our dying pillow beforehand with thorns, and prepare a bitter portion for our souls on our death-bed, when otherwise we might drink deep of the cup of divine consolation. How many of the children of God suffer the roots of bitterness, their own bad tempers, which had been effectually

conquered, to spring up again, and hereby are kept in a very low state of grace, while they exceedingly grieve that Holy Spirit who would otherwise save them to the uttermost!

When we had committed the mortal part of my father to the grave, and I had settled the temporal affairs of our family, I returned to London, just in time to join with the great congregation in solemnly renewing their covenant with God. This was the first opportunity of the kind that I had ever had. The Lord was graciously present, and it was a time of refreshing to many.

While I was down in Yorkshire I had frequent opportunities of preaching at Harewood; and the word of the Lord was attended with a peculiar degree of divine power, so that many were deeply awakened. But Satan prevailed upon the great man of the place to give notice to all his tenants either to quit their farms or give up Methodism; this frightened many of them. An honest Quaker went to the gentleman and said, 'I always thought thou hadst been a reasonable man.' He replied, 'Why, Joseph, have you any reason to think the contrary now?' He said, 'Yes; thou wilt not give thy tenants the same liberty that the king gives his subjects: he gives us liberty of conscience, but thou wilt not give thy tenants that liberty. I would advise thee to let them alone. Thou knowest they are honest, industrious men; and they pay thee thy rent very well. Thou hast no business with their consciences; their consciences are God's:

let them go to heaven their own way.' He did so, and never troubled them any more to the day of his death.

The remaining part of this year I spent in great comfort and peace with my fellow labourers. And although we had no very particular revival of the work of God, yet we had a gradual increase, and abundant reason to praise the Lord for ten thousand mercies.

In 1770 our Conference was held in London; when Mr. Wesley drew up those Minutes which afterwards gave such offence. Had they been more seriously considered in the Conference, I am persuaded they would not have been expressed in such an unguarded manner as that in which they appeared. However, the Lord brought great good out of this evil, if so it might be called; for it gave occasion to the publication of those excellent *Checks* of Mr. Fletcher, which have afforded many so much edification.

I was appointed for London again, with those truly excellent men, Messrs. Murlin, Rankin, and Allen. Nothing very remarkable happened in the course of the year, save that the Rev. Mr. Shirley published his Circular Letter, condemning the above Minutes, and inviting all the gospel ministers to attend our next Conference, and to enter their solemn protest against them. Mr. Charles Wesley, who had always a very warm side towards the clergy, was greatly alarmed, as were all our principal people. I endeavoured, in a meeting of the leaders, to explain these Minutes to them; by which explanation they were, in

general, satisfied. Only they, as well as some others, thought they might have been so expressed as not to have given such offence.

Throughout this year we had great peace and harmony, both among the preachers and the people. And we had the happiness to see the good pleasure of the Lord prosper in our hands, so that, in the conclusion of the year, we had abundant cause to praise the Lord for His manifested goodness.

In 1771 the Conference was held in Bristol. We had reason to expect a warm contest with the Calvinists, on account of the above-mentioned Minutes. A few of them attended, with Mr. Shirley at their head; but they were nothing near so formidable as we expected. They had very little to say in defence of their conduct; and the further discussion of the subjects in debate was, in a great measure, left to that great and good man, Mr. Fletcher, whose extraordinary writings have given abundant satisfaction to most of his readers.

I was stationed this year at Bristol[1], with my highly-esteemed friend, Mr. Murlin. We entered upon our work with the greatest cheerfulness, the Lord having made us as one soul. I am inclined to think that it has but seldom happened that two men were more closely united than we were, for many years, even to the day of his

[1] Wesley asks (*Works*, xii. 517) on December 26, 1771: 'Cannot poor Molly Jones discern the difference between John Pawson and T. Jones? In Tommy's conversation there is nothing solid or weighty; as neither was there in his preaching.' See also *Works* xiii. 26, for Wesley's confidence in his judgement.

death. We were favoured, throughout the year, with much of the divine presence, and with the love and esteem of the people; so that our labours were rendered truly delightful, and I hope also useful, through His blessing upon them.

In 1772 our Conference was held in Leeds; so that I had once more a happy opportunity of seeing my aged mother and all my dear relations, and had the unspeakable satisfaction to find them all steadily walking in the way of life, and in unity and harmony one with another. I was appointed to return to Bristol along with my faithful friend, Mr. Allen. We were most cordially received by the people, and had the happiness of seeing the work of the Lord prosper in our hands, in different parts of the circuit.

As I had long been satisfied that a change in my condition in life would be to my advantage, on July 23, 1773, I was married to Grace Davis, a person of a reputable family in Bristol, who had been savingly converted to God some years before. I entered into this new state of life in the fear of the Lord, and with a single eye to His glory. We had a truly Christian wedding, none being present but pious people; we spent the day in serious conversation, singing, and prayer, and I preached in the evening upon Ps. xxxiv. 22: 'The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate." Soon after this I was suddenly seized with an inflammation in my bowels, and was brought to the very gates of death. The pain which attended this disorder

was inconceivable ; but I was mercifully relieved, by the blessing of God, upon the use of proper means. Blessed be the Lord, my strength and my Redeemer !

Universal experience teaches that every state and station in life hath its particular trials and crosses, and that solid peace and permanent happiness are only to be found in the enjoyment of God. I was now at the height of my wishes as to temporal things, the Lord having given me a pious, sensible, pleasing helpmate ; but I still found the truth of that affecting word, ' Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." My wife became pregnant, and after a hard, tedious, and very painful labour, was delivered of two fine boys. The one died in the birth, the other lived only five weeks, and died also ; and what exceedingly increased my affliction, my dear partner continued in an exceedingly weak and deeply-afflicted state from June to October following, so that her life was in the greatest danger. But the Lord was entreated ; He heard the united prayers of His people, and she was raised up again ; though her constitution received a wound at that time which it never recovered. It is impossible for me to describe the painful exercise, both of body and mind, which I then passed through ; yet God supported, comforted, and, in due time, delivered me ; and I thankfully acknowledge His abundant goodness in this, in the kindness of Christian friends, and in our possessing every temporal advantage that our state and circumstances required.

Our Conference was held in Bristol in 1774, and many of the preachers tenderly sympathized with me in my distress. After all our affairs were properly settled, I was appointed to labour in Leeds, and my faithful friend, Mr. Allen, was appointed to labour with me; but it was not till the 10th of October that my wife could be removed from Bristol, such was her extreme weakness. After a long and very expensive journey, we were, through the good hand of our God upon us, brought safely to Leeds, and my wife gradually recovered strength.

As, through the affliction of my wife, I had been a kind of prisoner for some months past, I felt more sensibly the happiness of being at liberty to labour in the Lord's vineyard. I bless God, I entered upon His work with the greatest cheerfulness, and earnestly desired to spend and be spent for Him. My dear relations greatly rejoiced to see me once more, and my old friends and acquaintances received me with the utmost affection. We had no particular revival of the work of God in the circuit, but we enjoyed peace in all our borders, and witnessed a gradual increase in the societies, as well in number as in grace.

At the Conference in 1775, held in Leeds, I was appointed to continue there; and that truly simple and upright man, Mr. Tennant, who was well received by the people in general, was my colleague.

There was a good work of God in Leeds and in some other places in the circuit this year; but

it was attended with some degree of wildfire, chiefly occasioned by the imprudence of a well-meaning, weak man, who had far more zeal than knowledge. I laboured with all the prudence and tenderness I was master of, to preserve the good, and remove the evil: nevertheless, I was accused to Mr. Wesley as an opposer of the work; but as I had an opportunity to state the case to him, he was fully satisfied. He certainly acted with great prudence in this business, so that the peace of the society was preserved, and we finished the year with comfort to ourselves, and to the satisfaction of the people in general.

In 1776, the Conference being in London, my wife accompanied me thither. We had an agreeable journey, and on the road she had the happiness to see a beloved sister at Ashburn, to whom she was very much united. At this Conference I was appointed for Birstall, along with Mr. John Morgan and Mr. Tennant. My wife was now so far recovered that she could meet a class, and visit the sick and the poor, which she constantly did, and was made useful to many. We had great peace in the societies, and the work of the Lord prospered in our hands, and we went on our way rejoicing.

At the Conference in 1777, held in Bristol, I was ordered to return to Birstall; and had with me, as fellow labourers, Mr. Thomas Johnson, Mr. Joseph Thompson, and Mr. Tennant. This was the most glorious year I ever saw. There was an extraordinary revival of the work of God in Birstall and the neighbourhood. Very

many poor, ungodly creatures were savingly converted to God, and made happy in the enjoyment of His love. The people were awakened in various ways, under the word preached, at the prayer- and class-meetings, and some in their own houses, who refused to come to the preaching. In the course of the year there was an earthquake, and thereby many were alarmed, and constrained to return to the Lord. My wife had full employment among the newly-awakened people. She was excellently qualified to deal with them, and was made very useful to many. The work increased upon our hands to the close of the year; and as we were succeeded by that prudent, zealous, and active servant of God, Mr. Thomas Taylor[1], who spared no pains to nurse these young disciples of Christ, they were preserved; and not only so, but the revival spread far and wide, so that great numbers were brought to God. In the course of this year, the Lord sent a very destructive fever among the inhabitants of Birstall, and many of these young converts died happy in the love of God.

In 1778 our Conference was held in Leeds, and I was appointed for London, with Mr. Rankin and Mr. Tennant. The night before we set forward on our journey, I had a very narrow escape indeed. A very small bit of potato stuck in my throat, as I was eating my supper, and I was nearly suffocated thereby. So true it is, 'in the midst of life we are in death,' and therefore have need to be always ready.

[1] See Vol. VII of this series.

I remained in London two years, having for my fellow labourers the latter year my two good old friends, Messrs. Murlin and Rankin, with me. We had no particular revival of the work of God this year, yet we gained rather than lost ground.

It was during the latter year of my being in London, namely, in June, 1780, that those terrible riots happened. The time was certainly awful, and it was truly wonderful that no more mischief was done. They might have been suppressed in the beginning, with the greatest ease, but were strangely suffered to proceed in their bad work, with little or no interruption. The riots began on the Saturday night, were renewed on Sunday night, and continued till Thursday, when the Government interposed, and very soon restored peace to the city. I never could learn that the Protestant Association had any hand in this business; but it was believed by many that the Papists themselves were active therein. We were in no small danger, being greatly threatened by the Papists, on account of Mr. Wesley having published several letters against Popery at that time. A more awful and distressing sight I never saw, as we were surrounded with fire on every side; Clerkenwell prison, Newgate, the Fleet, the King's Bench prison, together with many other buildings, being all in flames at the same time. But it was truly astonishing to see how exceedingly still and quiet everything was when once the soldiers began to act. They gained very great credit by

their uncommon humanity, in treating the rioters (who set them at defiance) with such remarkable patience. Had they not done so, many more of those deluded people would have been killed.

In 1780 our Conference was in Bristol, and I was appointed to labour in that city, along with my faithful friends, Messrs. Rankin and Tennant. We were favoured with great peace and harmony among the people this year, but had no remarkable increase of the work of God. By constantly preaching at five o'clock in the morning, while in London and Bristol, my health was much impaired; I was brought very low, and it seemed as if I should not be able to hold out in the travelling line much longer. This gave me very little concern, as long life never appeared very desirable to me, being well convinced that to depart and to be with Christ is far better; but, by the blessing of God upon the means prescribed by Dr. Hamilton, I was very much strengthened, so that I proceeded in my work. Oh may I ever be unfeignedly thankful to the God of my life, for His unmerited mercy and goodness!

In 1781, our Conference being in Leeds, I had the happiness of seeing my dear relations once more, and rejoiced to find them all in the good old way. I was ordered to return to Bristol, along with my dear friend Mr. Murlin and William Moor. The preachers were much united, the people cordially received us, and the good work prospered in our hands.

At the Conference in 1782, held in London, I was appointed for York, along with Barnabas Thomas and Thomas Readshaw, both strangers to me. The weather during this Conference was such as had seldom been seen at that time of the year, being exceedingly cold and rainy. It seemed as if the whole harvest would be destroyed. The Lord, however, was entreated, and there was a speedy and a wonderful change in the weather; so that the corn was not near so much damaged as was expected.

Through the mercy and love of God, we came to York in great safety; but my dear wife was afterwards seized with a rheumatic fever, and brought very low. She was, however, mercifully restored; but from that time declined in her health very much, so that she was seldom well for any considerable space of time. My fellow labourers were neither of them very acceptable to the people; which, being added to the afflictions of my wife, rendered the year very uncomfortable: yet the societies increased in some degree.

In 1783 our Conference was in Bristol, during which Mr. Wesley was dangerously ill, and we were obliged to do a considerable part of our business without him. It was very agreeable to see how deeply the minds of the preachers were affected, and with what unity and harmony everything was settled. Many fervent prayers were offered up to the Lord in Mr. Wesley's behalf: he was greatly supported under his affliction, and was meek, patient, resigned, and

as a little child. The Lord was entreated; he was raised up once more to go in and out amongst us, and to regulate our affairs.

I was ordered to return to York, and had with me Mr. Edward Jackson and Mr. Charles Atmore, two faithful men, and very acceptable preachers. We came to York that very night when that extraordinary ball of fire was seen in the firmament all over the kingdom. I had a clear and distinct view of it for a considerable time. It appeared to me in the form of a very large sugar-loaf of fire, exceedingly bright and luminous, so that I was all surrounded with light for some time. It seemed to pass slowly over my head; and when it was gone a considerable space beyond where I stood, it appeared to divide into many parts, and disappeared.

This was a year of great and sore affliction to me: for, although my fellow labourers were very acceptable, were kind and affectionate both to me and my wife, and the work of the Lord prospered in our hands; yet soon after we arrived in York, my dear wife began to be so very much afflicted, that she was confined first to her room, and then to her bed, and on the 9th of December quietly breathed out her precious soul into the hands of her Redeemer.[1]

I spent the remaining part of this year in as agreeable a way as I could expect, but was often deeply affected in the lively remembrance of those[2] who were so justly dear to me, and whom

[1] An account of her is given in the *Magazine* for February, 1793.

[2] Mr. Pawson's mother died at Thorner, January 28, 1784.

the Lord had lately called away. My constant prayer, however, was, that I might be perfectly resigned to His will, and mercifully supported under my distressing trials ; and, for ever blessed be His name, my strength was in proportion to my day.

At the conclusion of the year we found that the Lord had crowned our labours with greater success than we expected, and added a greater number to the societies than we had been acquainted with. This was matter of praise and thanksgiving to us. We had a very solemn and deeply-affecting time when we took our leave of the people in York. Many were melted into tears, and I think would not soon forget what they then felt of the power and presence of the Lord. I cannot say that I was sorry to leave York (though I sincerely loved the people), for the remembrance of the afflictions I had there met with made me willing to leave the place.[1]

At the Conference held in Leeds in 1784 a greater number of preachers attended than had ever been known to attend a Conference before. This was occasioned by what was commonly called the Conference Deed, which was the unhappy cause of much discontent with some of the preachers and many of the people. For many years it had been very much doubted whether our chapels were properly secured to the Connexion. Various methods were proposed, but none fixed upon till the preceding year, when it

[1] See extract from private letters to Mr. Atmore (Lyth's *Methodism in York*, p. 145).

was agreed that this said Deed should be drawn up, and enrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery. The sole design of this was fully to ascertain the meaning of the word 'Conference,' so that it might be recognized by the law of the land. Accordingly, Mr. Wesley selected an hundred of the preachers, whose names were inserted in this Deed; and these and their successors were meant to constitute the Conference for ever. That the names of some of the old preachers were left out, and those of others, much younger than they, inserted, exceedingly offended the former, and surely not without cause. I do not think, however, that Mr. Wesley had any improper design in this, but that he did it without due consideration, not foreseeing the consequences which would follow. Dr. Coke has been very unjustly blamed, as having selfish designs in procuring this Deed to be made, and influencing the mind of Mr. Wesley in the choice of the preachers; but I am persuaded that, respecting both the one and the other, he was perfectly innocent.

I was appointed for Manchester, along with my invaluable friend Mr. Murlin, nearly worn out in the service of a good Master, and Mr. John Goodwin, whom I had recommended to the Conference about seventeen years before. Here I met with many of my old friends, and also with several who had been brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God under my ministry, when I was stationed here some years before. Two of these were leaders in the society. This, any one may suppose, was matter of rejoicing

to me; and I could heartily praise the Lord, who had, in any measure, made me useful in His hand to my fellow creatures.

Many of the people in Manchester, and in different parts of the circuit, were exceedingly lively, zealous, and active. And we had much of the power and presence of the Lord with us, so that His blessed work greatly prospered in our hands. Some of the people were in great danger of running into wildness; but, with all the prudence and tenderness we were masters of, we endeavoured to guard them against everything of the kind, and our labours were not in vain.

The preachers were very much united to each other: we acted by united counsels on all occasions, and cordially rejoiced in each other's success and happiness; so that the year passed away comfortably, only my late distressing trials had left a soreness upon my mind; but, after all, we closed this happy and prosperous year with great comfort, as we found that the Lord had added to our number four hundred souls. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Our Conference was held in London in 1785. When I came thither, I found, to my great surprise, that Mr. Wesley had come to a determination to ordain ministers for Scotland; and that Messrs. Hanby, Joseph Taylor, and myself, were desired to go thither. I had fully expected to return to Manchester, and had not the most distant idea of anything of this kind taking place.

I am well assured that this was a matter fully determined upon by Mr. Wesley himself, from the time that he ordained ministers for America; and although Dr. Coke might come into his views, believing that by these means the work of the Lord would prosper the more, yet I am satisfied that it was not through Dr. Coke's influence with Mr. Wesley that these steps were taken, but that the plan was wholly his own.

I had come to a determination to enter into the married state once more, being convinced that this would be the best for me in every respect: and, after serious consideration and much prayer, I had formed a connexion with Mrs. Wren, of York, one that I judged was every way suitable for me; and accordingly we were solemnly married by the Rev. Mr. Richardson, in York, August 12, 1785. She had been in the Methodist society for some years, and was a most sincere, upright, and lively Christian; and I doubt not but I shall have everlasting cause to praise the Lord for her.[1]

Having spent an agreeable week with our beloved friends at Thorner, we set forward on our journey to Edinburgh; and, through divine goodness, arrived there in safety, and found a very small but affectionate society. We had an opportunity of receiving the Lord's Supper the first Sunday we spent in this city. There were

[1] 'April 20.—On Thursday evening Mr. Pawson called upon me, and he told me at once, with an honest frankness, characteristic of his manners, that, as it had pleased Providence to take away his wife and my husband, he had thought that an union between us would be happy.'—*Diary of Mrs. Pawson* (1785).

several ministers present, and the whole service was conducted with great seriousness and solemnity, and in such a way as had a natural tendency to edify the people. We found it a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

I spent this year between Edinburgh and Glasgow, with Mr. Robert Johnson, a deeply pious young man. The Lord gave us favour in the sight of the people, and some degree of success in our labours : but there certainly is a very wide difference between the people in Scotland and the inhabitants of England. The former have, from their earliest years, been accustomed to hear the leading truths of the gospel, mixed with Calvinism, constantly preached, so that the truths are become quite familiar to them ; but in general they know little or nothing of Christian experience ; and general religion, or the life and power of godliness, is in a very low state in that country. I am fully satisfied that it requires a far higher degree of the divine influence, generally speaking, to awaken a Scotchman out of the dead sleep of sin than an Englishman. So greatly are they bigoted to their own opinions, their mode of church-government, and way of worship, that it does not appear probable that our preachers will ever be of much use to that people ; and, in my opinion, except those who are sent to Scotland exceed their own ministers in heart searching, experimental preaching, closely applying the truth to the consciences of the hearers, they may as well never go thither. The deep concern I felt for the prosperity of the work of God led

me to earnest prayer; so that my own soul was kept alive, and I got clearer views of the gracious designs of God in the gospel dispensation than I had ever been favoured with before; so that, I trust, I shall have everlasting cause to praise the Lord that I ever went to Scotland.

We had orders from Mr. Wesley to form our people into a church, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper among them. Many of the people had long desired this, others were very much opposed thereto, so that it was a painful piece of business. Had it been done many years before, there is reason to believe that it would have answered a good end; but now it appeared to me to be too late. We certainly were favoured with much of the divine presence at our sacramental occasions, and the people were very much refreshed and strengthened; and I believe that, by sitting constantly under our ministry, their judgements were better informed, their understandings more enlightened, and their experience both clearer and deeper than before. But, notwithstanding this, our labours have not succeeded in Scotland as in other parts of the nation: very far from it.

In my way to the Conference in Bristol, in the summer of 1786, I had the happiness of seeing our dear friends at York and at Thorner, and we once more praised the Lord together.

All our affairs were peaceably settled at this Conference; and it appeared from the accounts brought in that not less than eight thousand

souls were added to the societies the last year. I was ordered to return to Edinburgh with Mr. Charles Atmore, a lively, zealous young man, one every way agreeable to me. We were mercifully preserved on our long journey, and entered upon our work with great cheerfulness. We were favoured with much of the presence of the Lord, both at Glasgow and Edinburgh, but had no considerable number added to the society. We were enabled to build a large commodious chapel at Glasgow in the course of the year; and when finished we had very large congregations, and there was a good prospect of a prosperous work. In July, 1787, we returned to England, in company with good Mr. Hanby and his family; and, through infinite mercy, were brought in safety among our dear friends at Thorner.

This year our Conference was at Manchester; and after all our affairs were settled, I was appointed for Leeds, along with Mr. John Shaw and Mr. George Snowden, two mild and peaceable men. We were favoured with peace in our societies, had large congregations, the work of the Lord was deepened in the minds of many, and not a few died in great peace, leaving a blessed testimony behind them.

Poor William Shent[1] died this year, a melancholy instance of human instability. After preaching the gospel to others for forty years, there is too much ground for fear that he died in sin at last. 'Oh for grace to endure to the end!'

At our Conference in London, in 1788, we had

[1] See Vol. iii. of this series, pp. 65, 66.

great unity and harmony among us, and received good accounts of the work of the Lord from many places. All our affairs also were agreeably settled, except that of Dewsbury Chapel, which gave great pain to many. I was appointed for Leeds. This was a year of trouble and great perplexity to me; but the Lord brought me through the fiery trial, and did not suffer the flame to kindle upon me: everlasting praise be rendered to His sacred name!

The Conference was held in Leeds in 1789, and I was appointed for Birstall, along with Mr. Joseph Entwisle and Mr. James Ridall, two holy, upright, good-natured men. Had it not been for the sad effects of the separation in the society at Dewsbury, I believe we should have had a very comfortable year. We acted, however, in unity and harmony one with another; and the good pleasure of the Lord, in some measure, prospered in our hands, though not so much as we desired and expected.

At the next, held in Bristol, I was appointed to return to Birstall,[1] along with Mr. William Percival and Samuel Taylor, a young man who then first began to travel. This was the last Conference that Mr. Wesley attended: he was now nearly worn out, and his faculties evidently were very much impaired, especially his memory.

I returned to my circuit, in company with

[1] 'We had been invited to Hull, but Mr. Wesley, who lodged with us during the Conference, thought it best to station my husband here, that he might endeavour to compose some religious disputes which had broken out in this society.'—*Diary of Mrs. Pawson.*

Messrs. Thompson and Atmore. In our first day's journey my mare was taken exceedingly lame on all her feet. Hence I was greatly distressed, not knowing what to do; but as I well knew that it is the Lord who preserveth both man and beast, and that He hath all power, I cried unto Him in my trouble, and He graciously delivered me out of my distress. In a little time the lameness went off, and I was brought in safety to my own peaceful habitation. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

In March this year the Lord called home our spiritual Joshua. We had long expected this sore stroke, so that it was no surprise to us; yet, at the same time, we were filled with deep concern for the prosperity of that work which for so many years he had been the grand instrument, in the hand of God, of supporting.

Our Conference was held in Manchester in 1791. Mr. William Thompson was chosen our President; and, although we had many and great difficulties to encounter, yet, through the infinite mercy and goodness of God, we were brought through them all, and the preachers and the people continued united.

I was appointed for Halifax, along with Mr. Joseph Entwisle, who was highly agreeable to me; and, in May following, he was married to Mary Pawson, my brother's daughter, with the hearty consent of her friends. We had much of the divine presence in our assemblies this year; the work of God was deepened in many minds, others were brought to the saving knowledge

of God, and others were truly awakened, so that we had reason to praise the Lord for His manifested goodness.

In the year 1792 the Conference was held in London, and Mr. Mather was chosen President. It was with the utmost difficulty that the peace of the Connexion was preserved; but our disputes were settled, for the present, by a solemn appeal to the lot; and I was ordered to return to Halifax with that holy, upright young man, Mr. Robert Lomas.

Near the conclusion of this year, a very remarkable revival of the work of God began at a lovefeast, which was held in Greetland Chapel; the power of God came down upon the people in a very extraordinary manner, while Mr. Lomas was engaged in prayer; there was a general cry for mercy heard through the whole congregation, and many were brought into the liberty of the children of God. This blessed work spread into the neighbouring societies and into various circuits, and great numbers were made the happy partakers of redemption in the blood of Christ.

At our next Conference, held in Leeds, the preachers were pleased to make choice of me for their President. We had several very difficult affairs to settle; but the Lord our God was present with us, and we were mercifully brought through them. The whole body of the preachers also appeared to be more closely united than they had been. At this Conference we had the most solemn and affecting meeting, when the preachers, twenty-three in number, were admitted

into full connexion, I ever saw on that occasion. The Lord was most graciously present in the midst of us, and great was our glorying in the God of our salvation. The people sung the praises of the Lord more like angels than men, and surely it was a heaven upon earth to be there.

I was appointed for Liverpool, with Mr. Adam Clarke, a man of considerable learning, of extraordinary ministerial abilities, and one that I found much union with. Here we had large congregations, and a blessed prospect of much good being done. But, alas! the people were divided in judgement respecting the church and the sacrament; so that it was with the greatest difficulty we could keep them united in one body. However, notwithstanding all the difficulties we had to encounter, we had a happy and a prosperous year. Many were greatly quickened, comforted, and established in grace, and not a few were added to the society; so that we had abundant cause to praise the Lord for His manifested power and goodness.

In 1794 our Conference was held in Bristol, and Mr. Thomas Hanby was chosen President. Our disputes were very high respecting the sacrament, the trustees of several chapels being much dissatisfied; so that an unhappy division took place in the society in Bristol the next year, on account of these disputes.

I was ordered to return to Liverpool, with my highly-esteemed friend, Mr. Clarke. As it was not in our power to keep the people in general

quiet without the sacrament, we were under the necessity of complying with their wishes. This was certainly attended with an abundant blessing, and great numbers constantly attended that sacred ordinance. Surely the Lord was present in the midst of us, and caused the light of His countenance to shine upon us in a very remarkable manner; but those who were strongly prejudiced in favour of the Church were highly offended, and a considerable number left the society. This occasioned us much uneasiness; but still the work of the Lord prospered in our hands, and we had a considerable addition to the society. Many of the people were remarkably lively, zealous, and active, and their labours were attended with a blessing, so that we had great cause of thankfulness.

This was a year of great strife and contention: circular letters of various kinds were sent throughout the Connexion, and we were in great danger of a general division taking place among us; but God, in great mercy, prevented it.

In 1795 our Conference was held in Manchester, and Mr. Joseph Bradford was chosen president, chiefly because he was judged by many to be of neither party. Our disputes ran very high; but we kept a day of solemn fasting and prayer before the Conference began, which was attended with much of the divine presence; and, in order to give satisfaction to all parties, as far as possible, a Plan of Pacification was drawn up by nine of the preachers, chosen by ballot from the whole body, and we all sacredly engaged to act agreeably

thereto on all occasions; and by this means we were kept united in one body still, and our enemies were disappointed of their hope. Blessed be the name of the Lord for His abundant mercy!

I was appointed, though much against my will, for London, along with Messrs. Clarke, William West, Walter Griffith, Francis Wrigley, and Richard Reece. There had been much strife and contention there ever since the death of Mr. Wesley, which had greatly hindered the work of God. My good old friend Mr. Mather assisted me in making an agreement with the trustees, and in putting an end to all these unhappy disputes. Peace being restored, our congregations increased, and the work of the Lord, in some measure, prospered in our hands.

In 1796, when our Conference was held in London, Mr. Thomas Taylor was chosen President. We had much difficulty in settling our affairs at this time; but, through the unmerited mercy of God, we were preserved from dividing: only one of the preachers, who had by his publications occasioned great uneasiness, was excluded the Connexion.[1] My friend Mather and I were requested to go down to Bristol, in order to use our best endeavours to unite the society there; but, after all we could say or do, we could not prevail upon them to think and let think; so a considerable division took place.

I was appointed to continue in London, with several of the brethren above-mentioned. The preachers were united, and the unity of the society

[1] Alexander Kilham.

increased; a good understanding took place between the trustees and the people in general, so that the work of the Lord began to revive.

At the Conference in Leeds, next year, Dr. Coke was chosen our President; we had likewise a Conference of trustees at the same time. Now a small division took place. The preacher who was excluded the last year had laboured with his might to bring this about; and had prevailed upon three more to unite with him, and these divided the societies in several places. We had many painful exercises to pass through this Conference; but, upon the whole, we had great reason to praise the Lord that our affairs were settled so well, and that no greater division happened among us.

I was appointed for London a third year, and had for my fellow labourers Messrs. Clarke, Atmore, Marsden, and J. Ashall. Being exceedingly wearied with the business of the Conference, I hastened back to London sooner than I intended; and, by so doing, greatly disappointed my beloved brother, who earnestly desired me to return to Thorner after the Conference was over. And had I known that this was the last time I should ever see him, I certainly should have complied with his request. But, alas! little did I then think that this would be the case. In April following I had the melancholy news of his sickness and death. I hastened to Thorner; but they had committed his body to the ground the day before I got there, so that I had not the satisfaction so much as to see his

remains. This was exceedingly distressing to me. as I loved him as my own soul.

Notwithstanding all that have been called away by death, there is a goodly number of our family still on earth, and in the way to the kingdom of God. And I greatly rejoice in this, that the preachers are still entertained by my two nephews, at the same houses where they have been cheerfully received from the beginning. My brother's only son, being now comfortably settled in the world, thankfully receives the ministers of Christ, and cheerfully entertains them, in the same house where his father and grandfather did before him. Blessed be the Lord for this, and for all His manifold and great mercies! And my sister Tarboton's son entertains them at the same house where his happy father did for many years. Glory to that God who gives both ability and a willing mind! May they all continue faithful unto death!

Such was the present state of the London society that it was judged necessary for me to be stationed there a fourth year.[1] This I did not desire; but, on the contrary, judged it highly expedient for me to be stationed in Leeds, or as near Thorner as might be, that I might assist my nephew in the settlement of his affairs, being only in his nineteenth year. I hope, however, that my appointment was of God, and that it was

[1] At Spitalfields. He had been living in Wesley's House, where in 1797, from a mistaken sense of duty, he destroyed many valuable Wesley MSS. See Telford's *Wesley's Chapel and Wesley's House*, p. 117.

attended with a blessing to the establishment of peace in that society. In this good work I was assisted by our venerable friend Mr. Mather, who was appointed to labour with me in London this year. The people in general seemed to be well satisfied with my return to them, though some were of a different mind. My language was 'Here I am, at the disposal of my Lord and Master. Let Him make what use of me He shall see good. I am His redeemed creature; and I desire to spend and be spent in His service, and to live wholly to Him, so that at the last I may live with Him for ever.'

In the course of this year I printed an affectionate Address to the Junior Preachers. This was well received by the brethren in general, but not by all. A few young men were highly offended with it, and from these I met with unkind treatment; yet I had the thanks of the Conference for it. If ever my eye was single in any one action of my life, it was so in printing that Address. My grand design was to preserve the primitive spirit of Methodism in the preachers.

In the year 1799 I was appointed for Leeds, with Mr. W. Blagborne and D[avid] B[arraclough].

I was now near the close of my sixty-second year. I felt the infirmities of age coming upon me; but I bless the Lord, I could cheerfully sing,

My remnant of days
I spend in His praise,
Who died the whole world to redeem:
Be they many or few,
My days are His due,
And they all are devoted to Him.

There was a strong inclination in the people to hear the word, and the preachers were well received. We also had great peace and harmony throughout the circuit, but no considerable increase in the societies.

At the Conference held in London next year, I was appointed to return to Leeds with Mr. Barber and D[avid] B[arraclough], with whom I did not doubt but I should be very comfortable, considering them as good men, and acceptable preachers. The people were highly satisfied with the appointment, and we had great peace through the year. Our congregations were so large, especially at Leeds, that it was determined to build another chapel.

A little after this Conference, I wrote in my diary as follows: 'How many of our old preachers has the Lord lately taken to Himself, and very few of them are left behind! Messrs. Murlin, Roberts, Furz, and Mather are gone; and there are now only two in the Connexion who have travelled longer than I have done, namely, T. Taylor and Isaac Brown. I could not but take notice at our late Conference that there were only two brethren present who were at the Conference in 1762. Such a change do a few years produce! How deeply affecting are the words of the prophet: 'Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?' Oh no! The wisest, the best, and the most useful of men must die to be no more with the church on earth! But oh how wonderful is the wisdom, and how astonishing the goodness, of God! When He

calls one away, how strangely does He fill up his place in the church and in the world with another ! so that the man, however great or good, however useful or holy he may have been, is scarcely missed by the survivors, except it be by those in his own family and a few particular friends. And even with these time effaces those tender impressions from the mind ; so that, as our place knows us no more, so our best friends find they can be happy without us ; and seldom, after a few months or years have elapsed, do they so much as speak or even think of us.

' I am now, through the infinite mercy of God, in good health, though in the sixty-third year of my age. I am comfortably settled with good, friendly, useful preachers, among an affectionate people, and in the enjoyment of every temporal blessing. Oh that I may be sincerely thankful to the Giver of all my mercies, diligent, zealous, and useful in the hand of the Lord ; and may I stand in continual readiness to meet whatever change may take place in the course of this year, whether pain or ease, sickness or health, life or death. Amen.'

At the Conference held in Leeds, 1801, I was appointed for Birstall. I looked upon it as a privilege to go to so quiet a corner as I judged that circuit to be.[1]

Our Conference concluded in a very Christian-like manner, with serious, fervent, solemn prayer ; so that they who stayed to the conclusion of it were not only deeply affected, but parted one

[1] He was elected President for the second time at this Conference.

from another as Christian ministers ought to do on such occasions, not knowing that they should meet again in the present world.

I have now attended forty successive Conferences, which is more than any preacher now living can say, besides myself. How many more I may be permitted to attend, God knoweth. This I leave with Him with whom are the issues of life and death. My times are in Thy hand, O Lord. Many of our preachers have been called away in the course of the last year; and how many, or who, may finish their course this year, no one can tell but He in whose hand our life is. May He fully prepare those whom He intends to call, and may I stand in continual readiness to meet that most important event! May it ever be the language of my heart, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.' Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen and Amen!

We had great peace this year, but no considerable increase in the societies. Many of the people seemed to enjoy a good degree of inward life, were very zealous and active, and prayed most fervently and constantly for the preachers and the prosperity of the work of God. We were favoured with much of the divine presence in our meetings; and I do not remember ever to have found greater enlargement in prayer than this year. Blessed be the Lord for His abundant goodness and mercy!

I have now travelled forty years; and have not, in all that time, been confined by affliction of any kind forty days, but have been favoured

with almost uninterrupted health and strength. Through the mercy of God, I endure to this day. I may stand astonished when I consider how I have been preserved from what are commonly called 'misfortunes' all my life long; for though I have, many times, fallen from horses, and once was overturned in a coach, I never had a bone broken or dislocated. Praise the Lord!

By the mercy of God, I was brought to the conclusion of the year in peace. I earnestly wished to be excused from attending the Conference in July, on account of my age, and the great distance, it being held in Bristol this year. But the brethren would not excuse me. I set off, in company with Mr. J. Barber, a man that I greatly esteem. We spent a night with our friends in Sheffield, and I preached to them in the evening, with some degree of liberty. We spent the Sunday very comfortably in Birmingham. At Bristol I met with many old and dear friends, who appeared very glad to see me once more, and treated me with great kindness and affection indeed. It brought to my remembrance old times, when, being stationed among them, we took sweet counsel together, and were edified by the mutual faith of one another. A great number of preachers attended this Conference, many of whom I did not know. My mind was much affected in seeing the change which a few years had brought about, and how few old men were amongst us.

We had many useful sermons preached during the Conference, had in general large congregations,

and many fervent prayers were offered to God for the prosperity of His work and the enlargement of His kingdom.

I returned again to Birstall, and met with a cordial reception. May it be for the honour of God and our mutual happiness! Here I am, in this obscure corner, in my own little, quiet, peaceful habitation, where I praise the Lord, I live in love and peace with every one, and enjoy every temporal blessing I can desire. What can I wish for more but an increase of the life of God in my own soul, and that His good pleasure may prosper in my hand? How little did I think, when I entered upon this work, that my life would be lengthened out for forty years! Yet such is the goodness of God that, after these many years are expired and gone, here I am, a monument of His mercy, a witness of divine love, and an heir of everlasting life! Perhaps this will be the last year of my life, and the Lord may have sent me here to finish my course among my old friends, and near my native place, where I wish to rest with my fathers. If so, Thy will be done. O Lord, make me fully ready, and take me home when Thou wilt.

At the Conference held in Manchester in 1803 it was matter of great thankfulness to me to find that there had been an increase of numbers in our Connexion the preceding year; and I trust, also, an increase of solid piety. It appeared to me that the preachers, and people in general, were in as good a state as I had ever known them to be in. At this Conference I was appointed

for the Bristol circuit. I think I never at any time more fully committed myself into the hands of the Lord, in order that He might dispose of me as He pleased, than I did at this time. I am sure it was the prayer of my soul, 'Lord, send me where Thou wilt: only let Thy presence go with me, and I am content.' My dear partner and I paid a visit to our relations at Thorner for a few days; and I opened the new chapel, which they had just built. We had a large congregation, and a lovefeast afterwards. The Lord was present, His people were edified, and several declared, with freedom, what their gracious God had done for their souls.

I found the congregations in Bristol much larger than I expected. Many of the people appeared to be deeply pious, and to live in expectation of seeing a revival of the work of God, for which they prayed earnestly, knowing that the help that is done upon earth, the Lord doeth it Himself.

November 30.—This year, in a letter to Mr. Benson, speaking of some unprofitable speculations which some people were agitating in meetings held for that purpose, he says, 'I sincerely wish I may, to my latest breath, be like-minded with him who said, "I am determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." I am going out of the world, and I most heartily praise God for it. If I live till next Wednesday, I shall enter upon my sixty-seventh year. Praise the Lord, O my soul, for innumerable mercies.'

He proceeds in his diary: *August* 24, 1804.—'I have spent one year at Bristol, in great peace, unity, and harmony; and that both with the people and my fellow labourers. And the work of the Lord hath, in some measure, prospered in our hands. I am now entering upon a second year in that circuit, and the forty-third year of my itinerant life. The Searcher of all hearts knows that I would serve Him and my generation to the utmost. Lord, here I am, Thy willing servant: do with me what Thou wilt; employ me where and as Thou wilt; only be Thou present with me, and right precious to me. Let Thy abundant blessing attend me, and make my way prosperous. If this be the last year of my life, as it probably may, my prayer to the Lord is that it may be the happiest and the most useful year I have spent, and that I may be fully ready, whensoever or wheresoever the Lord may call me! O my God, let me finish well at last. Be present with me, O my gracious Redeemer, in my latest moments, and let me die on Thy loving bosom; let me fall asleep in Thy gracious arms, and let me live with Thee for ever.'

June 21.—This year he writes as follows to Mr. Benson: 'I have been earnestly pressed to visit Cornwall this spring; but I have refused. I am too old, and too insignificant, to go out on such popular visits. I wish to retire into some quiet corner, where I may live and die in peace. We are, through mercy, tolerably well at present, blessed be the Lord. Yet we feel the infirmities of age creeping upon us, in some instances, which

few know but ourselves. Yet good is the will of the Lord. Time will bring death along with him, ere it be long. But what then? seeing that to die is inconceivable gain!'

'At the Sheffield Conference in 1805,' says he, in his diary, 'I was appointed for Wakefield. This is very agreeable to me, as I am growing old. If it should please God to call me hence the present or next year, my friends would be at little trouble or expense in taking me to Thorner, where I might sleep with my fathers, which I greatly desire, if so the Lord should please to favour me. I am now in my sixty-eighth year, and various bodily infirmities are come upon me; but, through the abundant mercy of God, I am able to fulfil the duties of my station at present. How long that may be the case with me, God only knows; but I am in His hand, and at His disposal: let Him do with me as seemeth Him good. I cannot choose, and He cannot err. He is infinitely wise in all His ways, and holy in all His works. I thankfully acknowledge that my life has been a life of mercy and love. From my earliest years, the goodness of God hath abounded towards me. The Lord has been the guide of my youth, the strength and stay, the comfort and happiness, of my riper years; and now, when I am old and grey-headed, He does not, and I trust He will not, forsake me. I can say, on good and scriptural grounds, "My heart is fixed, O God! my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise." And God Himself hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Having

this blessed promise to rely upon, may I not, in the deepest humility and self-abasement, say, "Lord, I never will leave nor forsake Thee"? And why should I? Where and to whom can I go? I know, by happy and long experience, that He hath the words of eternal life. My mind has often been much affected by the words of our blessed Lord to His disciples, before His agony in the garden, "Ye are they who have continued with Me in My temptation." They had not turned their backs on Him, as too many had done. Oh that I, like them, may continue with my gracious Lord in His temptation; may abide steadfastly and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, let what will of storms and tempests arise, till He shall kindly sign my soul's release, and say unto me, "Come up hither, and take thy seat with Me." Amen.

"O would He more of heaven bestow,
And let the vessel break;
And let my ransomed spirit go,
To grasp the God I seek!

"In rapturous awe on Him to gaze,
Who bought the sight for me;
And shout and wonder at His grace,
To all eternity."'

The above paragraph is without date; but it seems to have been written either during or immediately after the Sheffield Conference, in 1805; and is the last that he wrote in his diary. On October 21 in that year, he wrote to Mr. Benson as follows: 'My complaint increases upon me, so that it is a doubt with me whether I shall

hold out to the end of the year. But, as Mr. Wesley used to observe, I am in good hands, and hope I can say, "The will of the Lord be done." I have been greatly favoured for many years with a large share of health, and have infinite cause to be thankful. I have not brought my present complaint upon myself; therefore I am satisfied that the Lord should deal with me as He shall see good.'

On January 18, 1806, he writes again to Mr. Benson, to the same purpose: 'I am fully satisfied that, if I hold out till the next Conference, it will be all I can possibly do. But it is matter of serious doubt with me whether I can struggle on till then. Was it not that this poor circuit has been so peculiarly unfortunate respecting the preachers appointed to it for the present year,[1] I certainly should give up without delay. But as we are circumstanced, I would gladly keep my place to the end of the year, if the Lord shall please to enable me so to do. I praise Him, I am perfectly satisfied with His dispensations toward me. I am in His all-wise and infinitely-gracious hand, and am satisfied that all things shall work together for my good.

'I have been in deep waters for some time past. My dear partner in life has been brought to the gates of the grave. But the Lord has been very gracious unto me: He has heard the prayer of His people, for ever blessed be His name! and through His unbounded goodness and infinite mercy, she

[1] Mr. Grant, his colleague in the Wakefield circuit, had left it immediately after Conference, through ill-health.

is now in a very hopeful way; and I trust, through the goodness of God, will be perfectly restored. I hope I shall never forget this singular mercy, but retain a thankful remembrance of it as long as I live.[1]

'Last Wednesday I attended the funeral of my sister Pawson, my late brother's widow. She was suddenly struck with what was thought a fit of the palsy, and died in great peace in a few days. So you see the Lord is visiting us with breach upon breach, and loudly calling upon me, at least, to be fully ready for the great and very important change. Long life or old age never appeared very desirable to me at any time, and much less so now than ever. The times appear exceedingly gloomy at present; and what the consequence will be, as to our beloved country, is only known to the wise Disposer of all events. It seems as if nothing could withstand that dreadful scourge. May our merciful God interpose in our behalf! Amen!'

He wrote again to Mr. Benson, January 25, when, speaking of some steps he was taking relative to the work of God in a neighbouring circuit, he says, 'You see I am acting as if nothing were the matter with me, and yet I was obliged to rise out of bed last night no less than twelve times. I have had the advice of several eminent physicians, but nothing that I have yet taken has

[1] 'My dear husband has left nothing undone that could alleviate my affliction. He attends me night and day, and prays (if it be the will of God) that we may not be separated at this time.'—*Diary of Mrs. Pawson.*

done me the least good. I believe the grave must be my physician. Glad am I that my time is so near a close.'

We conceive that an extract from four or five of his letters to some other friends, written about the same time, will be acceptable to the reader. In one, soon after the Conference (1805), he writes thus to Mr. Rankin: 'Oh that the spirit of faith and prayer, the spirit of power and love, may ever rest upon us! Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. Oh what a mercy of mercies is this, that we can still say, to the honour of God, that, having obtained help of Him, we continue to the present day! By His almighty arm, and by the comfort and help of His blessed Spirit, we have been preserved from a thousand dangers, and have been divinely supported, as well as comforted, under all our various crosses and afflictions. We may therefore well say, "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord." We feel that age brings its infirmities along with it, and death will come by and by. Well, let it come: I trust we shall be found ready; and then what a change! what a prospect! what a heaven! what solid peace and permanent happiness! Who can fully comprehend it?'

In one, in October, he says, 'I bless the Lord, I am in His gracious hands, and have the satisfaction to be fully assured that He doeth all things well. I wish to be wholly resigned to His will, whose I am, and whom I sincerely desire to serve.'

In another, in December, he adds thus: 'I

bless the Lord, my mind is perfectly easy; and I praise God that I know and feel I am in good hands. The Lord has been wonderfully kind to me, and that for many years: shall I then complain? Oh no! It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.'

In one of his last letters, written to Mr. Rankin, he says, 'What changes have you and I lived to see! How many of our fellow labourers have gone before us! Where are the Hoppers, the Cownleys, the Jacos, the Murlins, the Hanbys, the Mathers, the Manners, &c., &c., &c., and, above all, our venerable fathers in the gospel? They are all gone hence, and we see them no more.

The time is drawing very near when we shall be called to follow them through the awful valley; but, I trust, at the same time, we also shall mount up to the throne of God. There we shall unite, with all our beloved friends, in one eternal song of praise unto Him who loved us, and has already washed us from our sins in His own most precious blood! Welcome, thrice welcome, that happy day, when this clay tabernacle shall be taken down, and laid in the dust. I can cheerfully say, with our poet,

> What is there here to court my stay,
> Or hold me back from home;
> When angels beckon me away,
> And Jesus bids me come?

'My old and long-tried friend, what a prospect will soon, yea, very soon, open to you and me! I

can hardly forbear saying, Lord, hasten the happy time! O bring near the joyful hour! I think I shall, perhaps, get the start of you; and should it be so (if the Lord permit it), I will gladly give you the meeting, and show you the way to the celestial regions of bliss and immortal glory.'

He wrote to Mr. Charles Atmore:—

WAKEFIELD, *February 7*, 1806.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter came to hand this morning. I should not have written again so soon, only I think, if I do not, I shall not be able to write at all. This, I am inclined to think, will be the last letter you will receive from me; as I look upon myself to be upon the very brink of death. I preached last Monday night at Wakefield, and I am led to believe that I never shall appear in the pulpit any more. My painful, disagreeable complaint grows upon me very fast. . . . I have consulted many of those who are highly esteemed in the medical line; but no one has been of any use to me yet; nor do I expect to find any help from them. The Lord Himself must be my physician: I am in His blessed hands, and am perfectly satisfied. I trust I can say, from the ground of my heart, 'Father, Thy will be done.' Only let patience have its perfect work. Life is not at all desirable to me. No, no. To be dissolved, and to be with Christ, is far, yea, infinitely better.

I now bid you a final adieu; and can only say, with Moses, 'The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord lift up upon you the light of His countenance. The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and give you peace.' So prays your dying friend.

The following letter was to Mr. Entwisle :—

WAKEFIELD, *February* 23, 1806.

O MY BELOVED JOSEPH,

Where shall I begin to tell of the loving-kindness of an infinitely kind and gracious God, extended to a poor, weak, and helpless worm ?

> O for this love, let rocks and hills
> Their endless silence break,
> And all harmonious (mine in particular) human tongues
> The Saviour's praises speak !

O yes, my Saviour's praises speak !

The pain and sickness I have been called to pass through, I cannot describe. Human language falls far too short. But the sweet peace, the heavenly tranquillity, the holy, delightful, and heavenly joy, which my precious Saviour communicated to my soul, very far exceeds all description. This day fortnight, oh with what rapture, with what supreme delight, did I view my heavenly inheritance ! My soul, mounted up to the throne of God, my altogether lovely Saviour, the kingdom of immortal glory. The holy, happy spirits I saw worshipping at Emmanuel's feet, all ready to bid me welcome. In short, heaven itself surrounded me on every side. My beloved brother seemed standing at my bed's foot ! Nothing but my poor, weeping wife, and a poor thin veil of flesh and blood seemed to stand in my way. No ; glory to God in the highest ! No clouds, no doubts, no fears. No ; all was quietness, peace, and assurance for ever.

Last Sunday I was very ill indeed. I said to the doctor, ' You know, sir, that from the beginning I have had no wish to recover ; and now I have no hope. I believe I shall die ; and it would give me inexpressible pleasure to hear you say, that you have none (that is, no hope) ; and I believe you have

very little hope, or rather none at all, concerning me.' But since then I have gained a little strength. But what shall I say? I am as weak as sickness with violent retching can make me.

This is perhaps the last letter I shall ever write. Well, be it so; I can hold out no more. I am quite done for. Ten thousand blessings attend you and yours. Amen.

I am your affectionate uncle,

J. PAWSON.

ACCOUNT OF MR. PAWSON'S DEATH.

THE last sermon he preached was in Wakefield, on the 3rd of February, 1806, from Mark iii. 35: 'Whosoever shall do the will of God,' &c. He had for some time complained of indisposition, and now expressed himself as incapable of further labour in the ministry. On Thursday, the 6th of February, he was for the first time confined to his room, being now attacked by an inflammation in his bowels. From this period, he appeared to be fast approaching to the borders of the grave. This was to him a source of consolation, and he frequently declared that when his pain was most acute, his confidence in God was strongest.

On *Tuesday*, the 25th, to the astonishment of all, he came downstairs without assistance, and, with uncommon earnestness, exhorted those ministers who were present to insist especially on the necessity of enjoying the witness of the Spirit, and holiness of heart; and then declared that the only foundation of his hope was the

infinite merits of the Lord Jesus. On the same day he said to those around, 'All will be well soon. I can speak of my funeral as cheerfully as of my wedding.' In a conversation he had with a friend on the necessity of doing all things to the glory of God, he declared that he had never purchased a single article since his conversion but with an eye to eternity, and said, 'I have nothing to do: all is ready.'

Wednesday, 26.—Having, in the year 1800, under an apprehension that his time would not be long on earth, drawn up a letter of advice to his brethren, to be communicated to them after his death, he, on this day, with great solemnity, put it into the hands of a friend, with an earnest request that it might be read to them at the ensuing Conference, as containing his dying testimony and advice. And, when several friends were present, after expressing, in the most elevated and forcible language, his glorious prospects into eternity, he began to pray with the utmost fervency for the Conference, that they might abide by their original doctrines; also, in a most affecting manner, for his wife, that the Lord would enable her cheerfully to resign him into His hands, and support her through this trying scene; and then for every individual present. Though exceedingly weak, he, after this, at the request of Mrs. Pawson, with perfect recollection and presence of mind, baptized a child belonging to a particular friend: this was an affecting sight, and a most solemn season.

On *Thursday*, the 27th, to Mr. Smith, from

Birstall, he said, 'Give my love to the congregation, and tell them I am going to my precious Saviour; the heaven of heavens is open to my view; I have nothing on my mind; I have nothing to do but die. I have long been sailing to this fair haven. Sometimes the seas have been rough and tempestuous: Satan has often tried to raise a storm, if possible, to overset my little bark; but this he could not effect. No, no; now Satan hath no business with me; he appears to have quitted the field, and given it up as a lost case.' At another time he spoke to this effect: 'All the powers of darkness will never be able to extinguish the flame of divine love that burns within.' Soon afterwards he said, 'It is enough; Christ died for me; I am mounting up to the throne of God.' Then he broke out into the most rapturous strains of praise; and, clasping his hands, said, 'I know I am dying; but my deathbed is a bed of roses; I have no thorns planted upon my dying pillow.'

On *Friday*, the 28th, being told that he would fatigue himself by speaking too much, he exclaimed, 'I spend my breath as freely as I received it.' One of his friends reminding him he had not now to seek the Lord, he replied, 'No: I have not to seek the Lord, nor has He to seek me.' Some wine and water being offered to him, he (though scarcely able) took it into his own hand, and then, in the most solemn and affecting manner, administered to himself the sacrament. This was indeed a blessed and profitable season to all present.

On *Saturday*, March 1, about one o'clock in the morning, he spoke of death with the greatest cheerfulness, and, feeling at his pulse, wondered that he should delay his coming: 'I have no dread; all is prepared; death is welcome.' A few hours after this, he again committed his wife into the hands of God, telling her she would soon follow, and that the Lord would be her refuge and strength. Feeling himself exceedingly weak, he said, 'I am on the verge of eternity'; and with his utmost remaining strength exclaimed, 'Victory, victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb! Let my soul now take its everlasting flight.' After this he sung the following verse from one of his favourite hymns:

> O! could we but our doubts remove,
> Those gloomy doubts that rise;
> And see the Canaan that we love,
> With unbeclouded eyes!

'Doubts, gloomy doubts! where are they? I know nothing of gloomy doubts; I have none. Where are they gone?' A friend replied, 'I suppose they are fallen at the foot of the cross, where Bunyan's Pilgrim lost his burden.' 'O!' said our reverend father, 'but I am now upon the Delectable Mountains; and with the Shepherd's spying-glass I view the heavenly country.' At this time there appeared a favourable change in his complaint, which continued about ten days; during which period, through extreme debility, he was incapable of speaking much; but what he said was strongly expressive of his happy state.

'I have,' said he, at one time, 'neither pain, sickness, sorrow, nor a wish to live or die. All is well.

> My Jesus to know, and feel His blood flow,
> 'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below.

Yes, heaven already is begun, everlasting life is won, is won, is won! I die a safe, easy, happy death. Thou, my God, art present; I know, I feel Thou art. Precious Jesus! Glory, glory be to God!'

Sunday, 16.—Having passed through a very painful night, he said he thought two more such would carry him off; but added, 'All is well; my life is hid with Christ in God: and you, my dear partner, will soon follow me.' He then, with peculiar energy, spoke the following lines:

> Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
> O the pain, the bliss of dying!

Monday, 17.—Being asked if he wanted anything, he replied, 'I want nothing but my blessed Jesus, and death. But I have Him now: thanks be to God, Christ is mine. I am dying, but I shall live for ever. Christ is all in all to me: death is indeed desirable; but all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.' One present said, 'You will have a blessed change.' 'Yes,' said he, 'I know I shall.' To one who came to see him, he said, 'My kind friend, I am drawing fast to a conclusion. O my Jesus, it is all light and glory! I am completely happy; completely happy.'

On *Tuesday*, 18, suffering much from difficulty of breathing, he said, ' Dying work is hard work: but now my strength fails, God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever; yes, for ever and ever. Christ is my Saviour, my All. Help me to render unto Thee the praise so justly due to Thine excellent name for the support I feel. Thou dost not suffer me to faint; no;

> From Zion's top the breezes blow,
> Refreshing all the vales below.'

About eleven o'clock at night he began to be much worse; respiration was exceedingly difficult, and he appeared to suffer much pain.

Early on Wednesday morning, he said to his nephew and fellow labourer, who sat by his bedside, ' I feel I am dying, but must get up and die in my chair.' Soon after he was seated, he said, ' Now kneel down, both of you, and pray that I may be released, if it be the will of God.' After they had prayed, he took hold of the hand of each of them, and gave them his dying blessing. He then lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and said, ' Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Soon after he was again put into bed, and said, ' My God! my God! my God!' These were the last words he distinctly uttered. He was now incapable of speaking, and sunk very fast, but was perfectly sensible to the end. He died about twenty minutes past nine o'clock in the morning, apparently without any struggle or pain, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and forty-fourth of his

ministry; leaving a most glorious testimony that he was gone to be for ever with the Lord.

Mr. Benson, who preached Mr. Pawson's funeral sermon in City Road Chapel, London, received the following letter from Mr. Rankin :—

'My dear friend,

'Love to the memory of our (once) much-beloved but now deceased friend and brother, Pawson, constrains me to give you a few particulars concerning him, which may be of use to the living, who hear you this day. In the year 1762 I rode from the Sevenoaks circuit, in order to attend the Conference, then held in Leeds. There it was I first saw my much-esteemed and greatly-beloved friend: at that Conference he came out on trial; and with what general acceptance, as well as usefulness, he has laboured in his Lord's vineyard, from that period till his death, his brethren in the ministry, and thousands besides, are real witnesses. During the first seven years of his ministerial labours, as we were stationed in different parts of the kingdom, we only had the pleasure of seeing one another when we met at our Conferences. In the years '69 and '70 we were both stationed in London; and then commenced that union of hearts and labours that will only have its consummation in a glorious eternity. We endeavoured to strengthen each other's hands in the Lord; as also to exert all our little abilities in that work in which we were mutually engaged. When I returned from America in the year 1778, we were both stationed in London for two years

again. The seasons we enjoyed of mutual intercourse one with another, as well as in our united labours, to promote the glory of God, and the happiness of our fellow creatures, will never be obliterated from my mind. We not only freely conferred together, but often poured out our souls to God for each other's happiness, as also for the blessed work in which we were engaged. Those seasons of happy intercourse with God and each other are deeply engraven on my heart; and, I doubt not, are recorded in the annals above. In the year 1780 we were stationed together in Bristol. This was a year of much real happiness to both our souls; and our labours were not in vain in the Lord. The seasons for spiritual conversation and prayer were neither forgotten nor omitted. The return of that holy and venerable servant of God, the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, from the Continent, in the spring, 1781, was rendered a peculiar blessing to my deceased friend, as well as to myself. While he was with us in Bristol, his prayers, preaching, and conversation were indeed a divine stimulus to both our souls. We often spoke of them with pleasure; and the salutary effects which they left on both our minds were beyond the power of words to express. At the ensuing Conference my esteemed friend was separated from me; but the frequent letters which passed between us served to keep alive that sincere regard and mutual affection which we felt for each other. We rejoiced in each other's happiness, and in the prosperity of the work of God. I found him the same steady

and invariable friend at all times, and in every place, wherever he was called to labour. Neither time, place, nor distance made the least alteration. Indeed, the steadiness of his friendship was such that, except our Father in the Gospel, I scarce ever knew his equal. When he once sincerely loved his friend, it was not a little that would make him change his esteem, confidence, or affection. He was not one of those "who wonder at the strange man's face, as one they never had seen before." I shall never forget that sincere mark of his love which he showed to me three years ago last June. As soon as he heard I was come to Leeds (to which place I then paid a visit), he walked from Birstall to give me the meeting. The happiness of the interview was mutual and pleasing on both sides. We had many profitable hours together during the six weeks I spent in Leeds and its vicinity. There was another most pleasing trait in his character. He was a man of peace and love. This was manifested on a variety of occasions, the particulars of which need not now be detailed. The God of peace and love (with the word of Christ) dwelt richly in his heart; and from this permanent fountain the streams flowed. The four last years he was stationed in London were years of unspeakable pleasure to my mind. Many, very many, were the hours in which we took sweet counsel together how to promote each other's progress in the divine life; as also to render each other still more useful to the souls of our fellow creatures. The integrity and uprightness of mind which I always

discovered in my deceased friend, so endeared him to me that, while memory remains, his loved memorial will never depart from my heart. He never spared himself in his public labours for the good of souls. He was long blessed with health and strength, and he laid it out to promote the best of causes—the glory of God in the salvation of men.

'He loved the doctrines and discipline of the people called Methodists, and that from his very heart. It was his meat and drink to enforce both the one and the other. And in the prosperity of Zion he always greatly and sincerely rejoiced; and he felt keenly, and mourned deeply, for everything that had a tendency to the contrary. In short, his whole soul was in the work of his adorable Saviour; and such he lived, and such he died.

'THOMAS RANKIN.'

Mr. Pawson sent the following dying advice to the Conference:

'WAKEFIELD, *February* 26, 1806.

'VERY DEAR AND HIGHLY-ESTEEMED BRETHREN,

'Ever since I have known you, I have most sincerely and ardently loved you; and never had a thought, or a wish, but to live, and labour, and die with you. The Searcher of all hearts knoweth that I have rejoiced in your prosperity, and have mourned over you when oppressed, or when it has not been well with any of you. But I am now about to leave you for a season, and am going to unite with my fathers and brethren who have gone before me, to that city which hath foundations, whose Builder and

Maker is God. I die in the full assurance of a hope of being inconceivably and eternally happy with God my Saviour, and with all His redeemed people. I joyfully confess that I have not followed a cunningly-devised fable. I have not served God in vain. He hath not been to me "as waters that fail," but rather "as a place of broad rivers and streams"; so that I can declare, upon good ground, that not "one thing hath failed of all that He hath promised"; but "goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life," and I know that I shall "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

'I bless the Lord, I can declare in His presence that in all my doings among you my eye has been single. However I may have been mistaken, I have simply intended the glory of God, and the prosperity of His work. Therefore my mind is perfectly at ease respecting the part I have acted.

'May I be permitted, as a dying man, to give you a little advice? which I hope, when I am no more, you will seriously think of:

'1. Take great care that you all constantly maintain the primitive Methodist spirit. Be serious, spiritual, and heavenly-minded. Be lively, zealous, and active in the service of God. Be crucified to this vain world, and filled with that Holy Spirit which raises the soul from earth to heaven. You are in great danger of conforming to the world in your dress, in your manners, and in your spirit and temper of mind. Oh watch and pray against this deadly evil; and let not your wives and children fall into this snare of the devil.

'2. Take care that you constantly, clearly, fully, and pointedly preach the good old Methodist doctrines. They are the very truth, as revealed in God's own book. Never lose sight of "the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins"; and the full renewal of the soul in righteousness and true holiness. Constantly preach Christ, in all the richness of His grace,

and offer in His name a present, free, and full salvation —a salvation from the guilt, the power, and the very being of sin.

'3. Abide by every branch of our discipline. You have known the blessing which has attended it; but never try to make the door of the church narrower than God hath made the door of heaven. Never, no, never while you live, give the least countenance to anything like a persecuting spirit.

'4. Take all possible care to maintain a lively, spiritual, heart-searching ministry. To this end I entreat you, by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus never, no, never try to make ministers by substituting learning, or anything else, in the room of the call of God, and those spiritual gifts and graces which He always did and always will bestow upon those whom He sends to labour in His vineyard. The great Head of the Church will always take care to provide a sufficient number of faithful men to publish the glad tidings of salvation in His name. It is your duty to pray that the Lord of the harvest may send forth labourers; but never try to make them: He will do that Himself. Religion has been utterly ruined in almost every particular body of Christians by this deadly evil; the establishing a learned, instead of a lively spiritual, ministry.

'5. Be exceedingly careful in receiving candidates for the ministry. On no account whatsoever admit any but what you have sufficient reason to believe are soundly converted to God, are zealous for His glory, and who only wish to spend and be spent in His work. If ever the light and power of godliness begin to decay among the Methodists, look well to yourselves; for the first cause will be with the preachers. As long as you are truly devoted to God, and faithfully preach His word, a blessing must attend it, and the work of the Lord will prosper in your hands. But if you do not live in the Spirit, and copy the example of your Lord, you have no

right to expect that He will cause His blessing to attend your labours; and your spirit will but too soon be observed by the people, and they will lose the life and power of godliness, as well as yourselves.

'Thus I have freely communicated my dying thoughts to you, my honoured and dear brethren; and have no more to say, but only to pray that the God of all grace may be ever present with you all, and that He may crown your labours with abundant success, till each of you shall be called to receive your glorious reward in the kingdom of your Father above.

'I am, while living, and shall not be less so when dead,

'Your most sincere and affectionate brother, and cordial friend.'

Some additional Traits of the Character of the late Mr. Pawson. By Mr. Adam Clarke.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'METHODIST MAGAZINE.'[1]

Much respect has been already paid to the memory of our lately-deceased venerable friend Mr. John Pawson, both from the pulpit and the press; and most circumstances of his life and death are now well known to our congregations in general. But as several of those traits of character which could only appear in very private life, and would be remarked by those alone who were most intimately acquainted with him, have not been distinctly noticed either in the account of his life, or the sermons which have been published on the occasion of his death, permit

[1] 1807, p. 97.

me to bring a few additional circumstances before your numerous readers, that the man and his communication may be more distinctly observed when exhibited in those points of light in which he is most interesting, and his example most impressive and edifying.

In the years, 1793, 1794, 1795, 1796, and 1797, I travelled with Mr. Pawson; the two former in Liverpool, the three latter in London. When in Liverpool we lived almost next door to each other, and were frequently together morning, noon, and night; for the society being in a disturbed state, we were obliged to unite our counsels and exertions, at all times, to prevent schisms and to promote peace. It was in these troublous times that I had the opportunity of seeing Mr. Pawson in every point of view, and of estimating his character; and from my own observations, made principally at that time, the following memoranda are chiefly drawn, which, the reader will be pleased to understand, have all been confirmed by the testimony of his pious widow.

Mr. Pawson's deportment was at all times grave, dignified, and recollected. He had not a variety of forms for different occasions; his character was fixed and permanent, so that he was the same in spirit, whether in the pulpit, in his family, or among his friends.

Sacred things were ever treated by him with that honour and reverence which are their peculiar due. He highly esteemed every ordinance of God, and recommended each by his warmest exhortations and unvarying practice.

In social and family prayer, his manner was remarkably animated and devout; and in his addresses to his Maker, that intimate acquaintance which he had with Him was easily discernible.

Family prayer he never omitted, nor slightly passed over, however fatigued; judging that nothing but the overwhelming power of disease could be a sufficient excuse for the neglect of this most important duty. His manner in prayer, whether in private or public, was worthy of observation. He always kneeled: standing he deemed improper and irreverent. Bishop Hall has recommended both postures: 'I will stand,' said he, 'as a servant before my Master; or kneel as a subject before my Prince.' When we come to receive the commands of God in reading His word, for instance, the former posture may be very proper: but when we come as sinners to deprecate the wrath of an offended Judge, and to supplicate for mercy, the humblest posture is the most becoming. He was pained to see the standing system gaining ground among us in public prayer, and discountenanced it by every proper means. God forbid that it should prevail! Situations, postures, and circumstances have a remarkable effect on the mind, though they often exert their influence without being particularly perceived. Hence the posture in which we habitually put ourselves in order to slumber or sleep, almost infallibly induces the thing. But it requires only a small measure of reflection to convince us that those postures in which the

body is wont to find its ease, or vacate itself to comparative carelessness, must be improper in those acts of worship where the mental energy is seldom called forth without interesting and employing every corporeal power. Kneeling upright he fervently recommended, after the example of Mr. Wesley, who always insisted on the preachers acting thus. These may appear to many little things; but their effects are neither little nor unimportant. Kneeling down, and then leaning the body forward so as to rest on a bed, chair, &c., may be profitable to meditation, but is often prejudicial to the genuine spirit of prayer. Besides, it is a posture in which many are apt to fall asleep. I have witnessed this painfully on a variety of occasions.

At breakfast, dinner, &c., he never asked a blessing sitting. This he deemed a very unbecoming posture, and was heartily pained at several of our people adopting what he used to call 'this new mode.' As soon as breakfast was over, he went to family worship, which he never permitted anything to put aside. His method was to read a chapter in his regular order of going through the Bible, and then sing a few verses of a hymn before he went to prayer. On these occasions his prayers were always lively, and never long. I cannot forbear remarking here, that though small families, insulated in domestic occupations, may find that after breakfast is a convenient time for family worship, yet I am satisfied, from long and close observation, that before this meal is the best time. All the

family must, in general, come together to breakfast; immediately after, they become scattered to their different occupations, so that, in many cases, it is impossible to get them all together to prayer. This I have often been perplexed with, especially in families that do not live by rule; and how few are there that do! and to prevent or cure this evil, I always seize the time of their gathering together to food, in order to induce them to offer their joint supplications to God: for then, temptations to dissipation are less frequent, and calls to go out on business seldom occur, or are felt commanding, till that necessary meal be received.

Though Mr. Pawson was a man of a comparatively good constitution, yet he never could preach at five in the morning without being very seriously indisposed: he, however, frequently attended his brethren's ministry at that hour. His case puzzled Mr. Wesley more than anything of the kind he had ever met with. It is well known that he held it to be the indispensable duty of every preacher to preach at five in the morning wherever he could get a congregation; and that it contributed greatly to mental and corporeal vigour: but on several occasions he had the opportunity of seeing alarming consequences of exertions of this kind in Mr. Pawson, and was obliged to allow that his, at least, was an exempt case, for which he could not possibly account.

Though Mr. Pawson's talents as a preacher were not either extraordinary or splendid, yet

he was generally popular, and always useful. His voice was clear and sweet, yet strong and commanding; his manner plain and unaffected, but uncommonly animated and impressive. Every serious mind felt an unction in all he said; and perhaps there was no case where a person in spiritual distress left his ministry without having received comfort and encouragement. Before he went into the pulpit he took due care to secure to himself an hour of retirement, that he might come immediately from the presence of God into the congregation. He who can habitually act otherwise is never likely to be of much use to the church of God. Preachers should make it a point of conscience never to go out to tea the evening they have to preach, as this must necessarily break in on the evening's hour of retirement, and tend greatly to dissipate and unhinge the mind.

No congregation ever waited for Mr. Pawson: he was always in the pulpit precisely at the appointed time. He saw that want of punctuality in this respect had lessened the influence and hurt the usefulness of others, as well as injured the congregations; and therefore he ever avoided it.

The matter of his discourses was sound and edifying. He seldom preached without bringing before the eyes of his hearers the outlines, at least, of all the grand doctrines of the gospel. The opinions which state that Christ did not die for every man, and that indwelling sin must continue in the soul of a believer till death, he considered

to be horrible and anti-Christian: against these he raised his voice in a decisive but temperate manner. A free, full, and present salvation from all the guilt, all the power, and all the in-being of sin, was his constant theme; and though he never forgot to exhort believers to have respect to every moral duty, yet he took care to show that these without Christ were nothing, and that from Him alone all pure morality must necessarily proceed. Thus, like a wise master-builder, he was careful to lay his foundation aright, so that in his own soul and in others the superstructure might be permanent and glorious.

The doctrines of the witness of the Spirit, and salvation from all sin in this life, he considered a depositum entrusted by the especial mercy of God to the care of the Methodists; and was greatly distressed when he found any among ourselves denying them, or attempting to fret them away by far-fetched refined speculations.

The zeal with which he urged penitents to look for present pardon, and believers to expect immediate deliverance from all sin, was great and exemplary. Nothing short of this experience he considered as salvation; and multitudes felt the power of his persuasive arguments in reference to these grand objects, and became living and dying witnesses of their truth.

For several of the last years of his life the love of Christ, in dying for the sin of the world, was a subject on which he particularly delighted to dwell: the heavenly principle was rapidly

increasing in his own soul, and from the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke. To all who enjoyed a measure of communion with God, his discourses on this subject were exceedingly profitable.

In his own house his deportment was steady, and sufficiently authoritative, but always easy and cheerful. Regularity and economy marked his every step, and his family were moulded after his own spirit. Each seemed to feel reverence for the other, and yet there was no gloomy reserve ; all were cheerful, because all were happy.

In company he was one of the most instructive companions I ever met with. Having lived long in the work, travelled much, and seen a vast variety of men and things, which he was accustomed to view as connected links in the great providential chain of causes and effects, he acquired, through their means, much general knowledge and much experience. He had selected from his own observation a great number of anecdotes, some illustrative of the fantastic varieties of the human character, others of the providence, and others of the gracious operations, of God. These he detailed on all proper occasions in a very pleasing language and impressive manner. He had also acquainted himself very extensively with the ecclesiastical history of the past age, and was deeply skilled in that of the present, as he had been almost at the beginning, of that great work which God, by the instrumentality of the people called Methodists, had performed in these countries and in America.

This made his company very pleasant and very interesting. Knowing the end from the beginning he had it in his power to give much useful information to his junior brethren of the spreading of that cloud which first appeared as a human hand; and to call back those who were becoming eccentric to those first principles on which God had founded and by which He has regulated the whole of our economy and usefulness as a religious people.

I never met with an instance in the whole course of my acquaintance, whether religious or literary, where that description given by the Rev. Samuel Wesley was more strictly exemplified than in Mr. Pawson.

Not grave with sternness, nor with lightness free.

He never trifled; he never impaired his authority or respectability as a minister of God by any lightness or improper compliances. He could not, he would not, accommodate himself to any kind of company: 'I cannot,' said he, 'talk for the sake of talking, nor merely to oblige, when I have reason to believe no real good can be produced by it.' I have been with him more than once where there was such company as neither of us could be free in; and in such cases he was constantly silent, except when spoken to; yet even in his silence his pleasing countenance was a most intelligible index of his happy mind.

Though he was remarkable for the cheerfulness of his general temper, yet from the frequent impositions which had been practised upon him,

and the fear he had of entering into the spirit of the world, he was rendered sufficiently cautious; and this caused him to behave with distance and reserve to those he did not know. This induced some superficial observers to think he was morose, and others that he was unkind. He confessed he was not very easy of access to indiscriminate visitors; and that nature and grace had conjoined to make him so: 'Were I otherwise,' said he, 'my time would be more intruded on than it generally is.'

He was very susceptible of friendship, and formed many connexions of this kind, especially among the preachers: but in some cases this did not contribute to his comfort; for as he opened his whole heart to his friend, without any kind of reserve, he ever expected the same in return, and could not brook the shadow of neglect. Perhaps there is no love without jealousy; and where this exists, there must be a proportionate measure of anxiety and inquietude.

The principal failing I ever noticed in my venerable friend was too great a readiness to permit slanderous accusations, or slight evidences of unkindness, to induce him to break with some of those who, I am conscious, ever duly appreciated his excellences, and prized his worth. He was, however, not obstinate in these reverses; and when convinced that he had been misled or mistaken, his affection returned to that channel in which it delighted to flow. He had several particular favourites among the preachers; and it is worthy of remark that none of them ever

disgraced him, and they now deservedly rank among the most excellent in our Connexion. Singling out such men as the objects of his confidence was at once a proof of the sincereness of his piety and the correctness of his judgement.

His attachment to the cause of God was strong and invariable. The peace and prosperity of the work he sought and promoted with his whole soul and strength. He rejoiced in the welfare of Jerusalem, and deeply mourned in her adversities. When by the publication of his sermon on the Balm of Gilead, he had given that occasion which he never designed to his adversaries to say all manner of evil against the work of God, he was exceedingly distressed.[1] None can tell the deep agony his heart went through: that it hurt his constitution, and brought on his death sooner than in the course of nature it would have happened, I have no doubt. Let his adversaries hear this, and reap from it all the vindictive gratification they are capable of. His conduct for more than half a century, in trying and uncertain times, had sufficiently attested his affection to his country and his loyalty to his King; but because there were a few sentences that could be perverted to a meaning which in the most solemn manner he disavowed, and which every man that knew him was assured he never intended, he was hunted down by two or three desperate and

[1] In his private diary this matter is noted in a most affecting manner. He feared lest the clamour that was raised against him should be levelled against the cause of God, and often wished that his own name might be rather blotted out from among the living than that the cause of God should suffer any injury on his account.

uncharitable writers, as though he had been the most noisome of wild beasts, and the most seditious and inhumane of men. May God forgive them! and I have authority to say he forgave them from his whole heart; and that during the whole of this fiery trial, he was never known once to murmur, or to speak one unkind word of his persecutors.

His management of the concerns of the work of God in the circuits where he laboured was judicious and conciliating in a very eminent degree. He had no jars where he laboured; his authority was ever exercised with mildness and moderation, and was universally respected. It was easy to see that he had no end in view but the glory of God; and was always willing to sacrifice his ease, property, health, and life itself to the promoting the religion of Christ among men. Hence, no one could fall out with him, who had the same end only in view.

As God's glory was his sole aim, he was ever on the Lord's side; he could not temporize; he was instantly decided when he saw what he believed to be God's truth, and his own duty. In some cases he might be mistaken; but his object and principles never changed. He was what he used to say every genuine Christian should be, upright and downright.

For his conscientious attachment to truth he was remarkable. He never suffered himself to tell the same story in two different ways; and so fully had he habituated himself to integrity and scrupulous exactness in words, as well as in actions,

that I have often observed him to repeat the same stories and anecdotes, on different occasions, in precisely the same terms, without variation of language or additional circumstance! This was not merely the result of a good memory, but of a sound judgement and a conscientious heart.

I have already referred to his economy in general; but there is one branch of it so intimately connected with his uprightness that it should not be slightly passed by: I mean the great care he took of the furniture he found in the different circuit-houses where he lodged. He never permitted anything to be wasted, nor suffered any injury to be done to the meanest article, leaving everything at least in as good repair as he found it.

As he was a strict economist, and lived by rule, he was never hurried: everything was referred to its own place and time. As soon as it was necessary to perform any particular act, he never deferred it for an hour; so that his work was always done in due time, and he was generally beforehand with it. Temporal matters he never named till they became necessary, and never repeated afterwards, unless through the inattention of others they had been neglected. This kept him free from dissipation of spirit; and his mind was so recollected, and possessed of such self-government, that, after having fulfilled any extra engagement, he would return to his usual employment as if he had suffered no interruption.

His judgement was remarkably correct. I have had occasion to admire its decisions in a multitude of difficult cases. As his understanding

was clear, and his conscience pure, he seldom found much difficulty in apprehending the truth; and as he had nothing in view but the glory of God and the welfare of His cause, he formed his decisions with firmness and promptitude.

He never courted the friendship of the affluent, either in our societies, or among our hearers. In this respect he had a noble and independent mind. He endeavoured to think well of all; but he could not, as many have done, pay more attention to the rich than to the poor, nor slacken the reins of discipline on their account. There are many who continually forget that a man is before God simply what he is in his soul, and not what he is in his purse or possessions. Some carry this inattention so far that the smallest dawning of spiritual good in a rich or honourable man is magnified into a constellation of excellences. This is certainly knowing a man after the flesh, and consulting the sight of the eye only in judgement. The consequence of this conduct is ruinous beyond calculation. The rich man thus treated imagines himself to be what he is not; and trusting to the fancied goodness of his state, he halts long before his race is finished. Is it not through the influence of false friends and flatterers that so few of those who are in affluence ever excel in deep piety?

Salvation from the present evil world according to the will of God is much rarer among the followers of Christ than from their privileges and calling we might naturally expect: and hence there is much of that fear of man prevalent among

the professors of Christianity, which leads them to suppress the truth lest they should give offence. From Mr. Pawson's heart this, with the love of the world, had been long banished. When he first found peace with God, the love of the world was entirely taken away, and could never afterwards resume its ancient seat; indeed he often wondered how persons could reconcile the love of God with either the desire of the eye, the desire of the flesh, or the pride of life. The attempt to do this is a notorious profanation of the grace of the gospel, and should be ranked with the basest crimes.

Of Mr. Pawson's deep piety, of his extensive usefulness, and of his glorious end, others have spoken: I therefore forbear entering into these subjects, as they are amply treated in the account of his life and death, and in the funeral sermons by Messrs. Moore and Roberts, already published. One thing more I beg leave to present to the reader's view—that uncommon ease and copious flow of language remarkable in his conversation, epistolary correspondence, and in his preaching. As he had very few advantages from education, this could be attributed to no other cause but the order and harmony of his mind. Through this, every faculty performed its proper functions, and every idea had its peculiar place; whence it came forth in its regular connexion on every proper occasion, without irrelevance on the one hand or confusion on the other.

I cannot conclude this short sketch better than in the words of one who knew him better

than all others, and whose loss can only be made up by that all-sufficient God who has graciously promised to be the husband of the widow.

'If my late husband was esteemed a light in the church of God, his behaviour in his family was such to us. To take any part of his character separate from the rest, perhaps little striking may be seen in it: but when we consider that assemblage of the graces of the Spirit which were combined to give lustre to it, then the whole becomes striking and worthy of notice. He had a good natural understanding, and a solid judgement, improved by deep thinking: his words, therefore, carried weight with them. They were not delivered at random, but sprung from a mind that was accustomed to weigh what it was going to utter before a word was spoken. He was a polished stone, prepared by the Divine Master to glorify Him in His temple here below, by turning many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Some of these, after living a life of piety here on earth, finished their course with triumph; others are yet in the wilderness, praising God that they ever heard the Gospel from his lips. After labouring in the Lord's vineyard forty-four years, a great many were witnesses of the consolation he derived from those precious and essential truths he had been enforcing upon others during that period. He found them a solid foundation in his dying moments, enabling him to shout Victory! victory! through the blood of the Lamb.

'Whilst I cannot but feelingly lament the loss I have sustained in being deprived of such a husband, and the church of such an examplary pattern, may I with them profit by the example he has left us, and follow him as he followed Christ!

'F. PAWSON.'

The following letter, which is the last he ever

wrote, a short time after which his right hand forgot its cunning, I shall subjoin as his own last testimony to the power of God to save, and his concern for the full establishment and final prevalence of those glorious truths which he now found to be the support of his soul, when his heart and flesh failed. The occasion of it was simply this. On hearing that his disorder was rapidly gaining ground, but not knowing how low he was then reduced, I wrote a very pressing letter to him and Mrs. Pawson, to take easy journeys, and come immediately up to London, where he might have the best medical advice, and to continue with me till the Lord should be pleased to restore him. In this I was affectionately joined by my brother and sister Butterworth, who wished him to come and make their house his home. When this letter was read to him, he was much affected, and poured out his soul in ardent prayer for those who had requested him to take this journey. Notwithstanding his great weakness, when his nephew Mr. Entwisle, and Mr. James Burton, had retired from his room for a short time, he struggled out of bed, put on his morning-gown, got his writing-desk to his bedside, and wrote the following comparatively long letter, after which he never dictated nor wrote another :

'WAKEFIELD, *Friday, March* 7, 1806.

O MY ADAM, my most affectionately beloved and highly esteemed friend and brother, for whom, God knoweth, I ever had a sincere regard, but now tenfold more so than ever ; I return you my sincerest and most cordial thanks for your kind invitation to

me to come to London. Alas, how little did you know the state I was then in! Nevertheless, your love and kindness so tenderly expressed, call very loudly upon me for suitable returns of gratitude and love to you, and good and tender-hearted Mrs. Clarke, as well as to kind and generous Mr. and Mrs. Butterworth, to whom return my warmest acknowledgements.

'O my dear brother, what I have suffered, what I now continue to suffer, and what still lies before me, is only known to God. But, glory to God in the highest, I am in the hands of Him who ever was, and who never can cease to be, infinitely wise and infinitely good; whom I have found to be so to me, an unworthy worm, to the present hour. For ever blessed be His glorious name!

'What I have experienced of the power and goodness, of the unmerited mercy and love, of God during this affliction, is not to be described by me. O the views, the soul-transporting views, of that heavenly felicity that my soul hath been favoured with! My loving friend, praise the name of the Lord with me and for me. And you may tell all my beloved London friends, that J. Pawson dies a witness of the saving power of those precious truths which have been taught, believed, and experienced among us from the beginning of Methodism. Alas, for all the double refinements which a Mr. ——, or any one else, may have found out! Give me good old Methodism in its unadorned simplicity and plainness; in its spirit, life, and power; and they may (set) up one church, and try to set up another as high as they can. But God, and God alone, shall be exalted, and His name glorified by all His redeemed creatures through one eternal day.[1]

[1] Mr. Pawson alludes here to Joseph Cooke's attempt to invalidate the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, by endeavouring to prove that no more can be meant by it than the confidence and satisfaction which are felt by believers from a consciousness of the gracious change made in their state, and the

'I write thus freely to you from the grave's mouth, because I know your very soul loves the good old truth; and I trust you will live and die by it, and in full possession of it in your heart! But I must give up; I can do no more. I have had a sore bout with this incoherent scrawl; and whether you will be able to make it out or not, I cannot tell. My head is so weak that I can scarcely spell a word right.

'Ten thousand times ten thousand blessings attend you, your beloved Mary, and all your family! God Almighty bless, preserve, and keep you, and make you an abundant blessing to your family, the Church, and the world! J. Pawson's dying prayer for you is that goodness and mercy may follow you all the days of your life, and that you may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever! Surely, if the love of the people and preachers, joined together, can keep me from the grave, I must not die at this time. I never saw anything like it in the whole course of my life.

'Farewell for ever! Bless the Lord for me, and we shall all eternally enjoy Him very soon.

'I am most affectionately and eternally yours in Christ Jesus,

'J. PAWSON.'

Thus lived, thus died, John Pawson; a man of irreproachable integrity, of unspotted life, and of very extensive usefulness. As he honoured his God with his body, soul, and substance, so God honoured him with the highest affection and strongest confidence of His Church and people, with an unction and baptism of the Holy Ghost, and with such a victory and triumph over sin,

sincerity of their heart towards God. Edward Hare published three replies to Cooke, and Jabez Bunting's sermon on 'Justification by Faith' was called forth by Cooke's teaching. See Smith's *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, ii. 430–2; *Life of Jabez Bunting*, p. 386.

death, and the grave as would have been glorious even in apostolic times.

It is scarcely necessary to say to your readers in general that this heavenly man entered on the enjoyment of the eternal inheritance on the morning of Wednesday, March 19, 1806, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. Precious in the sight of God is the death of His saints ; and their name shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

ADAM CLARKE.

LONDON, *January*, 1807.

JOSEPH COWNLEY[1]

THE following narrative of the life of Mr. Cownley is chiefly collected from minutes of several conversations with him; and although I have had the perusal of his MSS., yet as he wrote no circumstantial account of himself, they afford but little information. Consequently the narrative will be found, in many instances, defective; nor is it possible to give a connected series of his labours. However, I hope it will be considered as a tribute, justly due, to the memory of a man remarkable for his piety and abilities. His labours and success in the ministry entitle him to the notice of a people whose interest was his constant care, and among whom his abilities were unremittingly exerted. History is disgraced by heroes who ought to be remembered more for detestation than for praise or imitation. It is only the useful and pious that we can admire with propriety, or imitate with safety. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the life and death of all His saints; and the memory and piety of the just should be had in everlasting remembrance.

JOHN GAULTER.

ALNWICK, *February* 4, 1794.

[1] From the *Arminian Magazine*, 1794.

Mr. Joseph Cownley was born June 26, 1723, at Leominster, in Herefordshire. His parents were not remarkable either for indigence or affluence. They gave their son an education which, though not classical, was every way adapted to his expectations in life; the earlier part of which was not chequered by profaneness, or the dissipation of pleasurable amusements. Even in youth he was cautious in the choice of his companions, and his manners were uncorrupted by the example or influence of others. It is indeed very difficult for young persons to escape untainted by the depraved conversation of neighbours and friends; but that it is possible, Mr. Cownley is an instance. This must not be imputed to any superior excellence in his nature, but to the powerful operations of preventing grace, to which he happily yielded obedience. From his first conscious perceptions, the Divine Spirit attracted his attention, and led his mind to reflect on eternity and the awful concerns thereof. He soon discovered the weakness and depravity of his heart, and the sinfulness of sin; but, although apprised of his malady, he was unacquainted with the method of obtaining a cure. He conversed with all the serious persons he could meet with, particularly a pious speaker among the Quakers, and a Dissenter of the Baptist persuasion. He received their instructions with gratitude, though it does not appear that he was clearly convinced of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus. His mind laboured under dreadful apprehensions of the divine displeasure. The evil and corruptions

of his own heart gave him the greatest uneasiness. He thought himself the most wretched of sinners, and frequently threw himself upon the ground, crying out to God, with inconceivable anguish of mind, 'No misery is equal to this: a wounded spirit who can bear?'

He denied himself of necessary food, and by abstinence and mortification thought to appease the divine displeasure; for, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, he went about to establish his own. So scrupulous was he about his words that when asked a question, he would answer, 'I think so; I believe so'; lest he should be found, through ignorance, not speaking the truth. In this state of mind he entered into the service of a justice of the peace, a man totally unacquainted with either religion or morality. In many respects, the place was eligible: it opened the prospect of a genteel and comfortable maintenance, and the perquisites of his office were considerable. He served the justice as a travelling secretary. All the servants of the family considered Mr. Cownley to be 'too religious'; but, to use his own words, when speaking of himself, 'I thought myself the vilest upon earth, because I was not what I considered a good man should be.' The gardener of the house said to him one day, 'Mr. Cownley, if you think that every one must be as good as you before they can go to heaven, you will go there by yourself.'

The business of the justice sometimes called him to Bath. In that city Mr. Cownley first heard the Methodists. He attended upon the ministry

of Mr. Williams, then a very popular preacher; and was pleased with the preacher, though not profited by the sermon. Soon after Mr. Wesley came to that place: under his discourses Mr. Cownley was fully enlightened: he then saw the impotence of his fastings, and the insufficiency of his morality, to purchase the favour of Heaven; and that there is salvation only in Christ. He could find no rest, he desired none, until the Lord, whom he sought, absolved him from his guilt, and gave him the witness and seal of pardon. That night, in which the Lord manifested Himself to the distressed mourner, he went to bed, deeply affected with a sense of his burden and misery. His rest was broken and interrupted. In the intervals of sleep, his cry was, 'God be merciful to me!' He was heard in that he feared. The words of our Lord to the paralytic were suddenly and powerfully applied to his mind: 'Thy sins are forgiven! Thy sins are forgiven!' The darkness vanished away from his soul, and the Sun of righteousness arose with healing in His wings. He was filled with divine joy, pleasure smiled in his eyes, and heaven reigned in his heart. While he was reflecting upon what the Lord had done for him, the following lines were applied with powerful energy:

> To save what was lost, from heaven He came;
> Come, sinners, and trust in Jesus's name!
> He offers you pardon, He bids you be free;
> If sin be your burden, O come unto Me!

Mr. Cownley was far from being a visionary: it was not from these impressions alone that he

drew conclusions of the divine favour; he had surer grounds. Peace and hope succeeded anguish and fear, and the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, accompanied with the most indubitable evidence that the change he felt, and the work wrought in him, was of God. Nothing less than this could satisfy a mind so well informed and so anxious to avoid every deception.

Mr. Cownley's employment exposing him to much company and conversation, which was frequently very disagreeable, he determined to quit his situation; but his diligence and fidelity having gained the affections of the justice, he was much averse to part with one whom he esteemed a faithful and upright servant. He therefore requested of Mr. Cownley to assign the cause that induced him to go away; which when he heard, he replied, 'I thought you had religion enough for us both, and should never have supposed that to be the reason.'

Mr. Cownley returned home to Leominster in 1743, where he found a little society that had been formed by Mr. Beaumont, a Welsh preacher, of Mr. Whitefield's sentiments. He joined this society; and next year he began to exercise those talents of instruction by which he was so eminently distinguished, and to preach that gospel, the truth of which the Lord had written on his heart. His first attempts were received with approbation, and crowned with success. Several were brought to the knowledge of salvation, and established in the truth: they loved and respected him as a father; and his intention

was to live and die in fellowship with them, having no expectation of being ever engaged in a larger sphere of action. At this time many of the Methodist societies were agitated by unprofitable disputes about opinions. The spirit had reached Leominster. Several believed the decrees of Calvin, and others supposed that these sentiments were opposite to Scripture and reason. Among the latter was Mr. Cownley. He wrote to his father in the gospel, Mr. Wesley, requesting his advice in these critical circumstances. The answer is worthy of being preserved, as it shows the amiable spirit of the writer; and, though directed to Mr. Cownley, was addressed to the society.

'BRISTOL, *September* 20, 1746.

'MY DEAR BRETHREN,

'As many of you as have set your hands to the plough, see that you go on, and look not back. The prize and the crown are before you, and in due time you shall reap, if you faint not. Meantime fight the good fight of faith, enduring the cross, and despising the shame. Beware that none of you return evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. Show forth out of a loving heart your good conversation, with meekness and wisdom. Avoid all disputes as you would fire: so shall ye continue kindly affectioned one toward another. The God of peace be with you.

'I am your affectionate brother,

'JOHN WESLEY.'

His endeavours to establish peace in the society, and to extinguish the violent animosity of party, proving unsuccessful, Mr. Wesley requested his attendance at Bristol, and engaged him in the important office of an itinerant preacher. The forms of admission into the Connexion at that time differ from the present. Mr. Cownley kneeled down; and Mr. Wesley, putting the New Testament into his hand, said, 'Take thou authority to preach the gospel.' He then gave him his benediction. His first appointment was for Bristol, where his labours were attended with considerable success.

At this period of his life his voice was very strong, soft, and harmonious; and as he felt the most lively conviction of the truths he taught, his discourses raised in the hearts of the hearers the same heavenly persuasions. He had no design upon their passions; nothing could give him more sensible pain than to perceive mere mechanical effects from his preaching—a few tears without conviction, which pass away as the morning cloud or the early dew. God gave him remarkable power to remonstrate with sinners. The stoutest heart quaked when he pronounced, with his awakening energy, 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel? Have I any pleasure in the death of a sinner? But if ye turn not, ye shall die; ye shall surely die, saith the Lord God!' There are many now living who remember his fervour and zeal, before those infirmities commenced which constrained him to confine the overflowings of his soul, and to relax from those exertions in

the cause of Jesus, which distinguished the first part of his labours in the vineyard.

Near the close of 1746 he left Bristol, to encounter the violence of the mobs in Staffordshire. His appointment was in those troublesome regions of Darlaston, Wednesbury, and Walsall. In this neighbourhood he continued three months. Persecution had raised a powerful opposition to the truth. The priests, the magistrates, and the mob were united, and determined to crush the infant society, to prevent what they called 'the progress of superstition and enthusiasm.' By such names is the doctrine of a sinner's pardon through faith in Jesus Christ distinguished. Truth is mighty, and will prevail; for in proportion to the rage of opposition was the success. Sinners were brought out of darkness into light, and exchanged the tyranny of Satan for the glorious kingdom of liberty and love. Many were awakened and converted; the gates of darkness were opened; the pillars of hell trembled; and numbers experienced that the kingdom of heaven is within us. The persecutions in this part of the kingdom form a remarkable trait in the history of Mr. Wesley, who has related some of the circumstances in his Journal for 1746.

Mr. Cownley's next remove was into Cornwall. The fruits of his labour in that county are now only known to a few, to whom his memory is still dear. He travelled in Cornwall about three months; and then removed to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he arrived in March, 1747. The people received him with every mark of affection.

Multitudes attended, and many were converted from the error of their ways. There are still living witnesses that the word he preached was the 'power of God unto salvation'; and when the effects of novelty subsided, he was loved for his piety, and esteemed for his abilities.

Mr. Cownley continued at Newcastle until the beginning of July, 1748. In the preceding year, Mr. Williams, an intimate friend of Mr. Cownley, went over to Ireland. His preaching was attended with success. Multitudes flocked to hear; and, though in the midst of the greatest opposition, he formed a society. Several of them knew that God does now also give 'the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins' to those who repent and believe the gospel. The next year Mr. Trembath informed Mr. Wesley that they were persecuted on every hand, but that the society 'stood like marble pillars; and, by the grace of God, were resolved rather to die with Christ than to deny Him.' The situation of affairs in that kingdom requiring an increase of the most able preachers in the Connexion, Mr. Cownley was appointed for Dublin. He arrived there in July, 1748, where he laboured for about three months. Here a very painful disagreement took place between him and Mr. Samuel Larwood, which induced Mr. Wesley to interpose, in order to reconcile the contending parties. It arose from an impropriety in Mr. Larwood, who, without reason, and in opposition to his brethren, admitted and expelled members of the society. This affair may appear uninteresting; but, as it gave rise to a remarkable

feature in Mr. Cownley's character, it was necessary to mention it. Incidents, apparently small in themselves, generally form what may be considered peculiar in our manners, which equally expose us to censure or praise. This was the case with Mr. Cownley; his mind was painfully disturbed, and so deep were the impressions that time could never remove them. He resolved from that moment never to say an unkind word to those with whom he might differ; and I believe he kept his resolution to the day of his death. If he was called upon to attend meetings where there was the least expectation of any differences or debate, he always excused himself, if possible; and if unavoidably present when any were incidentally introduced, he generally rose up and walked out. One day I desired him to inform me what were his reasons for being so singular. He related the preceding affair, and added, 'I cannot bear it, because it gives me so much pain to see any offended.' I once saw him in the most exquisite distress from a supposition that he had given unnecessary offence to those who differed in opinion from him.

The work of God, by the successive labours of the preachers, spread through different parts of Ireland. In Cork a society was formed in the face of violence and opposition exceeding all description. In the latter end of November, 1748, Mr. Cownley went to that city, where he preached at the peril of his life. But such was the spirit which influenced the preachers, that they counted not their lives dear, so that they might win souls.

The mob, headed by a brutal barbarian of the name of Butler, did not stop at insult. Forgetting every dictate of reason, or feeling of humanity, they attacked the congregation with stones, clubs, and swords; so that the lives both of the preachers and people were in imminent danger. Outraging all law and security, they broke the windows, and burst into the houses, of every one suspected of heresy; where they committed crimes which are as painful to conceive as to describe. The magistrates were applied to, but without success; instead of affording assistance, they added fuel to the flame: the preachers were presented by the grand jury as vagrants. It is something singular that in that memorable presentment, preserved in Mr. Wesley's seventh Journal, Mr. Cownley, by a misnomer, is called Joseph M'Auliff. At the assizes these disorders were discountenanced by His Majesty's judge, and in a little time the mob was finally suppressed. This persecution, so far from preventing, rather increased the zeal of the preachers; the Lord smiled on their labours, and numbers were added to the church of Christ.

After continuing some time in Ireland, Mr. Cownley returned to Newcastle in the spring of 1750.[1] A letter which he received from Mr. Wesley will give some idea of his situation about this time:

'DUBLIN, *April* 12, 1750.

'MY DEAR BROTHER,

'I DOUBT you are in a great deal more danger

[1] This should probably be 'the autumn of 1749.' (See Standard Ed. of Wesley's *Journal*, Vol. iii, p. 429).

from honour than from dishonour. So it is with me. I always find there is most hazard in sailing upon smooth water. When the winds blow and the sea rage, even the sleepers will rise and call upon God.

'From Newcastle to London, and from London to Bristol, God is everywhere reviving His work. I find it is so now in Dublin: although there has been great imprudence in some, whereby grievous wolves have lately crept in amongst us, not sparing the flock; by whom some souls have been utterly destroyed, and others wounded, who are not yet recovered. Those who ought to have stood in the gap did not. But I trust they will be wiser for the time to come. After a season, I think it will be highly expedient for you to labour in Ireland again. Mr. Lunell has been on the brink of the grave by a fever. Yesterday we had hopes of his recovery. I see a danger you are in, which, perhaps, you do not see yourself. Is it not most pleasing to me, as well as you, to be always preaching of the love of God? And is there not a time when we are peculiarly led thereto, and find a peculiar blessing therein? Without doubt, so it is. But yet it would be utterly wrong and unscriptural to preach of nothing else. Let the law always prepare for the gospel. I scarce ever spoke more earnestly here of the love of God in Christ than last night. But it was after I had been tearing the unawakened in pieces. Go thou, and do likewise. It is true the love of God in Christ alone feeds His children. But even they are to be guided, as well as fed.

Yes, and often physicked too. And the bulk of our hearers must be purged before they are fed. Else we only feed the disease. Beware of all honey. It is the best extreme; but it is an extreme.

'I am your affectionate brother,

'JOHN WESLEY.'

In the autumn of 1750 Mr. Cownley left Newcastle, and proceeded to Bristol; from whence he sailed to Ireland. He visited several places in that kingdom, and established societies. In Limerick, when preaching in the street, he was beset by a mob. The principal promoters were soldiers, one of whom assaulted Mr. Cownley. The soldier being noticed by a friend, Mr. Cownley complained to the commanding officer. With a justice which so frequently distinguishes the conduct of the British officers, he desired Mr. Cownley to name the punishment, and it should be inflicted. He answered, he only desired peace; which was soon restored by the timely exertions of the commander. A different spirit influenced one of the ministers. He was determined that none of his parishioners should be Methodists. Many, indeed, were out of his reach; but the poor were threatened that their weekly allowance should be stopped unless they desisted from hearing these men. This holy inquisitor sent for a poor old woman who attended the preaching, and with an air of vast authority demanded, 'And what do you believe? What is your faith?' With great simplicity she began

to repeat the Belief. He stopped her, with an oath, and said, 'That is my faith': then, with a torrent of imprecations, and expressions which are too wicked to be repeated, he dismissed her. It will not demand any remarkable degree of discernment to determine which had the most of the spirit of Christianity, the military or the priestly officer.

Mr. Cownley continued in Ireland a short time,[1] and then returned to Newcastle. I have not sufficient documents to fix his different stations, nor the success of his labours, from 1751 to the beginning of 1755. Through powerful exertions in preaching, he had fallen into a languid habit of body, which was succeeded by a malignant fever. Calmly resigned to the disposal of Providence, he waited with Christian fortitude the event, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.' In a little time he was restored to his friends, and to the church of God. In the month of October, 1755, he was married at Cork, to the pious and amiable Miss Massiot, of that city.

From his first connexion with the Methodists he cultivated the friendship of Mr. Whitefield. Mr. Cownley loved him for his work's sake, and revered his memory to the last. They corresponded with a freedom peculiar to the disciples of Jesus, and which is the natural offspring of love and union. The following letter illustrates the temper of this heavenly man, and his great esteem for Mr. Cownley. As it is an original, and the

[1] See Wesley's *Journal*, July 23, 1752, for an awkward climb up the rocks near Dublin, which he and Mr. Cownley had.

writer was conspicuously eminent in the present revival of vital religion, it will no doubt be acceptable to many.

'NEWCASTLE, *September* 16, 1755.

'MY DEAR MR. COWNLEY,

'DARE I wish you joy (after having been in sight of your heavenly port) of putting out to sea again? I hear you are upon the recovery, and therefore humbly hope, as your sickness has not been unto death, that it has been only a kind purgation to cause you to bring forth more fruit. Then, then shall you sing,

O happy rod,
That brought me nearer to my God!

Perhaps ere this reaches your hands, you may be entered into the marriage-state. May the everlasting and ever-loving Bridegroom of the church bless both you and yours, and give you to live as becometh the heirs of the grace of life! I hope you will never say, "I have married a wife, and therefore can no longer come forth into the highways and hedges." I dare not entertain such a thought of my dear Mr. Cownley. No: whatever others may have done, I trust he will never say, "I pray you now have me excused." God forbid. A good wife and a good fortune call for double diligence in the work of God. You see I love you, by writing thus. A few days ago I was in hopes of seeing you; but now I fear it is too late. Oh this pilgrim's life! With a pilgrim's heart, how sweet! You must pray for me. I want to begin to do something for

Jesus. I am a dwarf—a dwarf; and yet, oh amazing love! Jesus still vouchsafes to bless and own my feeble labours. Everywhere the fields are white, ready unto harvest. Oh for more disinterested labourers! Then shall we go on, and be terrible, like unto an army with banners. This be your happy lot in Ireland! Pray remember me to all as they come in your way; and accept of this as a token of unfeigned love from, my dear Mr. Cownley,

'Yours, &c., in our common Lord,

'GEORGE WHITEFIELD.'

The danger of an increasing property is here judiciously adverted to by Mr. Whitefield. Few there are who, in the midst of affluence, support that spirit of religion which distinguished their characters in humble situations of life. The history of Methodism abounds with awful examples of the reverse. Tempers and dispositions which honoured the cause of the Redeemer have been changed, in consequence of an increase of fortune and importance. This friendly caution was not lost on Mr. Cownley. He treasured it up in his heart; and no alteration in his temper or manners could be discovered. His soul had higher cares. He had fixed his heart on God, and laid up all his riches in heaven! He had a charge—the charge of souls. He could not desert the flock, nor 'for a grasp of ore, or paltry office, sell them to the foe!' He did not; he lived for their service, and died watered with their tears.

The zeal which influenced the minds of the

preachers, and their continued exertions in promoting the everlasting interest of men, was much encouraged by a reciprocal intercourse by letter. It was then, and continues to be, admirably adapted to increase and maintain a holy spirit of emulation among the brethren. May these instances remind us of that spirit which we ought to impart in all our communications with each other! The following letters I consider of this nature, which, without any other apology, I shall insert:

'BRISTOL, *December* 10, 1755.

'MY DEAR MR. COWNLEY,

'NOT want of love, but of leisure and opportunity, has prevented my answering your kind letter. Immediately on the receipt of it I was called to the west of England; and since that, from a cold contracted in the north, I have been threatened with an inflammatory quinsy. But, alas! like you, when putting into harbour, I am likely to put out to sea again. Oh that it may be to take some prizes for my God! Blessed be His name, though I am reduced to the ungrateful necessity of preaching only once a day, yet I find the word of the Lord doth not return empty. Congregations are very numerous, and fresh stirring there seems to be among the dry bones. Letters from Virginia inform me that above a hundred have lately been awakened in one county; so that I trust the walls of the new Jerusalem will be built in troublesome times. May the glorious Redeemer make use of you more and more in this divine employ; and may you

daily be built up in your most holy faith! From my very inmost heart I wish you all the blessings of the upper and nether springs; and, if the Lord spares life, hope to see you in Ireland. Continue to pray for me as one that loves you tenderly; and, though less than the least of all, yet, your affectionate friend and ready servant for Christ's sake, 'GEORGE WHITEFIELD.'

'SUNDERLAND, *August* 14, 1756.

'MY DEAR MR. COWNLEY,

'I AM glad to hear that you are restored to your throne again, and that Jesus is still honouring you in preaching the everlasting gospel. As I am now on my tour to Scotland, I have thoughts of coming to the north of Ireland, and pay you a visit in Dublin. How it will turn out, the Lord of the harvest alone knows. I hope the work is upon the advance with you. In London there hath been a most glorious awakening all the winter. Almost all last week we had most blessed seasons thrice a day in and about Leeds. At York, Yarm, and here, Jesus hath done wonders; and surely it is the wonder of wonders that such a worthless wretch as I am should be employed by Him. Help, O help me to praise redeeming love! Oh for a hundred thousand lives to spend in the service of Christ! Adieu, my dear man, adieu! My love to all. I earnestly entreat their and your prayers, that if I come, it may be in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ; for whose great name's sake, I subscribe myself, Yours, &c., 'GEORGE WHITEFIELD.'

The fever which Mr. Cownley had in 1755 so relaxed his nerves that his labours were considerably interrupted. A pain settled in his head, which no medicine could ever remove. After consulting the most able physicians in Ireland, he stated his case to Mr. Wesley, and received the following answer :

'LONDON, *January* 10, 1756.

'MY DEAR BROTHER,

'I HAVE no objection to anything but the blister. If it does good, well ; but if I had been at Cork, all the physicians in Ireland should not have put it upon your head. Remember poor Bishop Pearson. An apothecary, to cure a pain in his head, covered it with a large blister : in an hour he cried out, " O my head, my head ! " and was a fool ever after to the day of his death. I believe cooling things, if anything under heaven, would remove that violent irritation of your nerves which probably occasions the pain. Moderate riding may be of use ; I believe of more than a blister. Only do not take more labour upon you than you can bear. Do as much as you can, and no more. Let us make use of the present time. Every day is of importance. We know not how few days of peace remain. We join in love to you and yours. I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate friend and brother,

'JOHN WESLEY.'

Though no radical cure was effected, yet the severity of the disorder abated by some attention

to his manner of living and preaching. He removed to Dublin in the beginning of the year 1756, where Mrs. Cownley was delivered of her first child; and in the month of October he arrived at the Orphan-House in Newcastle. The work in the north of England extended much by the united labours of Mr. Cownley and Mr. Hopper, and their brethren. Several societies were founded, which continue to this day. On the banks of the Tyne, in Prudhoe, and Nafferton, beside a variety of other places in that neighbourhood, numbers were truly awakened and converted to God. In one of Mr. Cownley's excursions into the Dales, he was insulted by a mob headed by a clergyman. Warm from the village-tavern, this zealous son of the Church, with the collected rabble, advanced to the field of action. Mr. Cownley was preaching near the door of an honest Quaker, when the minister insisted that he was breaking the order of the Church, and began to recite the canon against conventicles. Mr. Cownley replied, 'If I am disorderly, you are not immaculate'; and reminded him of the canon 'for sober conversation, and against frequenting ale-houses.' Confounded with the application, the parson retired for a while; but, mustering up his courage, he again returned, and, with threats of prosecution, began to take down the names of the hearers. A Quaker, who was one of the congregation, hearing the alarming denunciations, stepped up, and, with unruffled gravity, clapped the parson on the back, and said, 'Friend John, put my

name down first.' This ended the contest: quite disconcerted, the clergyman withdrew, and left Mr. Cownley to finish his discourse in peace.

The active life of Mr. Cownley has already been considered. We are now to view him in his more confined and local situation. On account of his health, his station has been principally in the north of England; his disorder rendering him incapable of fulfilling the duties of an itinerant life. The inveterate headache so oppressed his spirits that, to use his own expression, 'the keenest attacks of the gout were nothing in comparison.' His chief residence was in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. At first he had apartments in the Orphan-House, but afterwards he furnished a house for himself. Though enfeebled by infirmities, he exerted his remaining strength in calling sinners to repentance. He visited those parts of the north which now include the Newcastle, Sunderland, Hexham, and Alnwick Circuits. Wherever he came he was received as a servant of God. The Lord owned and blessed his labours among the people; and the living seals still praise him in the gates. He was like a centre of union to the preachers; and they treated him with the reverence of a father, more than with the familiarity of a brother.

After his return to England, and fixing his residence in Newcastle, he continued to consult medical men. Dr. Turner, a gentleman high in professional eminence, gave him the most flattering hopes of a radical cure; but theory is disputable, and promises of this kind are rarely

confirmed by success. Mr. Wesley recommended the doctor to Mr. Cownley as a person on whose medical skill he might depend. He stated his case, received the prescriptions, but his expectations were disappointed. Satisfied that his disorder baffled the address of human art, without a murmur he resigned his body and soul into the hands of his almighty Benefactor; and sought, in the consolations of religion, and in the resignation of patience, a relief which the hopes of his friends and the assurances of physicians had promised in vain.

Though Mr. Cownley was admired, he never affected popularity. His disposition, had he lived in the austere ages of monkish superstition, would have led him to the cloister. All noise he dreaded, as much as it is courted by others. His chief delight was in the pulpit, his book, and his God; his visits to others were rather the effect of duty than inclination; and his conversation was chiefly confined to the great truths of religion, the work of God, and the experience of Christians. Few men, with his connexions, have been more abstracted from the world; perhaps he indulged the desire to excess—

> Along the cool, sequestered vale of life,
> To keep the noiseless tenor of his way.

In this year (1757) I have many reasons to believe that his soul was truly alive to God, and that the life he lived was by the faith of the Son of God. Several of his letters which were written about this time are preserved. They reflect a just resemblance of his mind—a mind ardently

desirous of the happiness of others. One to his amiable and intimate friend Miss Allen (now Mrs. Carr) is an example of genuine simplicity:

'*October* 9, 1757.

'DEAR BETTY,

'NEVER forget that one thing is needful. Wherever you are, whatever you do, have that one thing always in your eye. Remember the world is a cheat; and that he who has most of it will be constrained one day to say, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Keep up communion with your God. Contrive every day to meet Him in some private place or other. He expects it. It is a sign of no great intimacy when we have nothing to communicate to a friend but what we can always do in company. Search His word, and meditate on it; be familiar with His friends, esteem them as the excellent ones of the earth, and converse as much with them as may be; keep your lamp trimmed and burning, and have oil in your vessel; endeavour as often as possible to be in the way when the mails arrive from Mount Zion. You know that they always bring good news for pilgrims and strangers. I am just going with a mail to the Fell. The Lord grant I may have good tidings for many. Think of us when your Lord bids you ask what you will. Mrs. Cownley joins me in love. I am your affectionate friend and brother,

'JOSEPH COWNLEY.'

Mr. Cownley's life appears to contain nothing remarkably interesting from 1757 to 1760; but

as he was charged with disaffection to the established clergy, it may not be improper to examine the justice of the charge[1]. No man was more attached to serious persons of every persuasion than Mr. Cownley. If he had predilections, they were favourable to the pious of the Establishment; but as his heart and life were influenced by the gospel, so were his opinions. He did not admire in the gross, nor censure without discrimination. He had learned to distinguish; and in his views the precious and the vile were equally objects of praise or detestation. In the course of his travels he had frequently opportunities of forming just estimates of men and manners; and it was impossible, to a man of his observation, that the characters and doctrines of many of the clergy should pass unnoticed. Uninfluenced by subordinate or any motives but those of truth, he sometimes offended by exposing the wickedness of clerical impiety, and the consequences of their defection from the doctrines of their fathers; but if this was a crime, Mr. Wesley, Dr. Burnet, Bishop of Sarum, and the present Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Horsley, are equally criminal: with such company, bigotry itself will forgive. From the natural mildness of his character, he never indulged improper severity.

From trials Mr. Cownley was not exempt; he

[1] See Charles Wesley's letter to John (Tyerman's Wesley, vol. ii. p. 254). John Wesley wrote in 1755 to his brother: 'Joseph Cownley says, "For such and such reasons I dare not hear a drunkard preach or read prayers." I answer, "I dare." But I cannot answer his reasons.'

had to grapple with those which unassisted nature is too feeble to endure. Previous to his union with Miss Massiot, a deed of settlement in trust was executed. This vested the management of the principal part of her property in two trustees. Several years after the execution of the deed, one of the trustees died ; and the other, a gentleman of the name of Matthias, removed to Jamaica. It is not my intention to trace the various mazes of his difficulties : it is sufficient to observe that through the trust, and a variety of other causes, his affairs were involved in the utmost confusion ; so that, though Mrs. Cownley brought a fortune of near three thousand pounds, his family were on the verge of beggary. Suspense is always disagreeable ; but when it involves our support, and that of our family, it is more—it then becomes one of the most painful situations in which we can be placed. For many years this was his case, between hope and despair ; but it had a happy effect : his soul was led to centre in God, where he waited in hope. In his distress, he found in the pious Mr. Charles Greenwood a friend indeed ; the recollection of whose disinterested kindness only expired with his breath. In 1766 it was thought necessary that he should come up to London ; where, if I mistake not, he resided with Mr. Greenwood. Though his business was secular, he had work to do for his great Master. His labours were received, not merely with acceptance, but with admiration ; and several remember that visit with gratitude. It was not until the following year that his affairs

were finally adjusted by a new assignment upon the original trusts. On Mr. Greenwood's receiving the writings from Jamaica, with the signature of Mr. Matthias, he expresses the warmth of his affection: 'You cannot conceive what pleasure this news gave us. I thought of those words of the old clerk in the country after a wedding, "This is a joyful day indeed." We heartily wish you and dear Mrs. Cownley health to enjoy it, and that you may live to bring up your little ones in the fear of the Lord.' Thus ended a business the remembrance of which gave him pain and pleasure; and of which he said to me, 'I did not know that I was worth a farthing in the world.'

There are few religious societies, not those immediately under the notice of the apostles, but what have been exposed to the illusion of enthusiasm. We read the scriptural accounts with regret; but it is some mitigation to remember that these effects generally arise from the weakness, though sometimes from the wickedness, of men. There is not an established or independent church in Europe but what has been disgraced; but if religion, or any particular society, must be reproached because of the frantic reveries of some of their professors, then every branch of science, as well as religious community, will have full measure, pressed down, and running over. In 1760 and 1761 an extraordinary work commenced in London: the kingdom of the Redeemer was enlarged, many were convinced and converted, numbers were added to the society,

and renewed in love. By the folly of a few men, the blessing was perverted. The principal visionary, and who exceeded the rest in delusion, was George Bell, whose piety and zeal degenerated into madness and fury: from a dreamer he became a prophet, declared himself immortal, and finally predicted the end of the world. It is impossible to describe the confusion into which the excesses of these men threw the society. An extract of a letter from Mr. John Downes, a friend of Mr. Cownley, may throw some light on an affair which should remain as a monument of possible extravagance.

'My dear Friend,

'As to the follies and extravagances of the Witnesses, I consider them as the devices of Satan, to cast a blemish upon a real work of God. The letter from brother Lawrence, in Mr. Hampson's *Book of Letters*, is a short description of it. The more I converse with the solid ones, the more I long to experience what they do. It is a state worthy of a Christian. As to the follies of the enthusiasts, Mr. Charles hears every week less or more. Why his brother suffers them we cannot tell. He threatens, but cannot find in his heart to put in execution. The consequence is, the talk of all the town, and entertainment for the newspapers. What will be the end, who can tell? My friend is strongly invited up to town to help in this time of need: I mean, to quell these pretenders to prophecy, &c. O my friend, I only want to love the Lord Jesus. I

am sick of all besides. Will you not help me on by your prayers? 'Yours, &c.,

'JOHN DOWNES.'

There was something in Mr. Cownley's disposition averse from the slightest approach of fancy and imagination in religion. From his experience he had been taught that nothing prevents a real, more than the appearance of a fictitious work; that dreamers and prophets are generally persons of suspicious characters, or whose understandings are only remarkable for their weakness. It cannot, therefore, be a matter of astonishment that we find him using all his influence to prevent and resist a torrent of imaginary piety which exposed Methodism to reproach, and sensibly injured the interest of vital religion. Mr. Cownley was earnestly solicited by many of the friends to come up to London to assist in crushing an evil which menaced the society with destruction. The reasons why he did not do not appear, though it is most probable the principal cause was the situation of his temporal affairs. The spirit which prevailed in the centre affected Methodism in its remotest branches. But there the disorder, in its commencement, met a powerful resistance. Mr. Cownley, Mr. Hopper, and several others opposed with success, and had the happiness of seeing it expire. Mr. Charles Wesley, from the beginning, had been in opposition to George Bell and his associates. This appears from several letters which he wrote to Mr. Cownley, one of which I shall insert.

'BRISTOL, *February* 1, 1763.

'MY DEAR BROTHER,

'I RECEIVED a letter from you just before God laid His hand upon me and took away my strength. Full often have I intended to answer it; for my love to you is the same as ever; and my hope of you is steadfast, that you will be of those who endure to the end. Sad havoc Satan has made of the flock since you and I were first acquainted. What they will do after my brother's departure I leave to the Lord, for I dare not think of it. I gave warning, four years ago, of the flood of enthusiasm which has now overflowed us; and of the sect of Ranters that should arise out of the Witnesses. My last hymns are a farther standing testimony. Tell Christopher Hopper I reverence him for his stand against the torrent. The Lord is your strength and wisdom. You had need keep close to Him and His word. Remember me and mine.

'Yours most affectionately,

'CHARLES WESLEY.'

Mr. John Wesley has been much censured for want of firmness in resisting these enormities in their rise; but what the severity of criticism may object, a candid examination will reject. Though prompt on the call of manifest danger, and instantly executive, yet, as there was, in his views, a probability of the remedy being worse than the disease, a man of his feelings and piety would naturally suspend. His situation was peculiarly delicate; he embraced all the consequences,

and concluded that the violence of the flame might be soon expended; that patience and forbearance would more effectually extinguish what a sudden and violent resistance might increase. If his hopes were not realized, it is no proof that his intentions were not just; and he had the satisfaction at least of attempting to save the society from a division which at last became necessary. It would be improper to enter more minutely on a subject the particulars of which are to be found in the Journals and Life of Mr. Wesley.

From Mr. Cownley's first conviction and conversion his union with the Methodists was unshaken. Though the affliction under which he laboured exposed him to the temptation of settling in a society where his labours might have been acceptable, yet no consciousness of abilities or prospect of emolument could alienate his affections or labours from that community in which he was brought to the knowledge of salvation. That he had opportunities, both before and after his incapacity to travel, of enjoying a lucrative situation, I have many reasons to believe; but his heart was fixed, and such was the force of his love of those tender connexions which are formed in the unity of undisguised religion that nothing but violence or expulsion could have separated him from his brethren. As I could not pass unnoticed a conduct so meritorious in Mr. Cownley, I hope it will not appear an improper introduction to an animating letter from his friend Mr. Whitefield:

'London, *September* 1, 1766.

'My dear Mr. Cownley,

'Indeed, and indeed, I received no letter from you whilst abroad. Sickness prevents my corresponding more frequently now I am come home. Home, did I say? Where is my home? Where yours lies—in heaven. There is our citizenship! There may our conversation always be! Blessed be God that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed! Yet a little while, and He that cometh will come, and will not tarry.

We soon shall hear th' archangel's voice;
The trump of God shall sound, Rejoice!

Methinks I hear you and yours, dear Mr. Hopper's whole self, and all the Orphan-House true pilgrims, adding, "Amen! Hallelujah!" Oh for one more meeting on earth, before we take our flight to heaven! Abba, Father, all things are possible with Thee! Is it practicable for you to come to town, to assist at the Tabernacle for a month or six weeks, if you have proper notice? My helpers, as well as myself, are invalids. Dear Mr. Wesley, I am persuaded, will readily consent. We are upon very good terms.

O may we find the ancient way,
Our wondering foes to move,
And force the Heathen world to say,
See how these Christians love!

God bless you all! Does Mr. Hopper think to go to heaven before me? Well, my turn must come by-and-by. Help, dear friends, help to pray thither,

'Yours, &c., in a never-failing Jesus,

'George Whitefield.'

No materials of which I am possessed enable me to continue this biographical sketch of Mr. Cownley from 1766 to the death of Mrs. Cownley. Years had not impaired, but increased, their reciprocal affection. Parents of a numerous family, they enjoyed in domestic society all that happiness of which humanity is capable. But, alas! all human comforts hang by a dubious thread. We possess with uncertainty, and inherit but for a moment. To lament the departure of a friend is not only a principle of nature, but religion; and that man must be lost to all those divine affections which the friends of Jesus experience who can with a barbarous apathy commit to the grave the partner of his joys and sorrow. This was not his case on the death of Mrs. Cownley. As his affections were not the result of passion, the affliction of his loss remained when its violence had subsided; and, to his last moments, every recall of the past revived the anguish of his grief.

In the month of March, 1774, Mrs. Cownley being pregnant, it was expected that she would soon take her bed. Her mind had been impressed with a persuasion that she should never survive. Under this presentiment, with the greatest calmness, she formally parted with her friends. To one she said, after embracing her, 'I shall never see you here again.' So perfectly satisfied was she of the truth that all the demands on the family were paid, her affairs settled, and she literally prepared to die. Mr. Cownley had engaged for a few days to visit the friends in

Alnwick, and, without the least apprehension of danger, proceeded on his journey. Her eyes followed him until he passed out of sight: she then shed tears, and said, 'I shall never see thee any more.' As her danger approached, her confidence increased. She had long taken Him for her portion who has said, 'I will never forsake thee,' and in the last struggle of nature was not disappointed. Her labour came on, she was brought to bed, and soon after expired. But hers was not a setting, but a rising sun. The victory was complete. The fears of death had fled like the shades of the evening. She triumphed in the name of Jesus: that precious name hung upon her lips. When burst the bonds of life, immortal happiness dawned upon her soul, and

Her last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

Unconscious of the collecting storm, Mr. Cownley was quietly pursuing his labours when he received the message of her danger. He set out from Alnwick, but before his arrival in Newcastle Mrs. Cownley was no more. It is easier to conceive than describe his feelings from an event so little expected; though it was some mitigation to his affliction that her confidence was not shaded by a doubt. His soul seemed to follow her into eternity; and that state of invisible intelligence became as familiar in contemplation as sensible existence. To soften the severity of the loss, Mr. Cownley did not want the consolations of friendship. A letter on this subject, in which most are interested, will at least be excused, if not acceptable.

'London, *June* 9, 1774.

'My dear Brother,

'It is the Lord! Let Him do as seemeth Him good. He has taken away the desire of your eyes with a stroke; but He does not forbid you to feel your loss, like Ezekiel. It is a great thing that you can submit, and patiently bear your incomparable loss. By-and-by you will feel the comfort of calm and perfect resignation. Perhaps you may not be joyful in tribulation till, through much tribulation, you enter the kingdom. You shall go to her, and then you will know perfectly the love of your Father in this severe affliction, and comprehend how all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth. If you were with her now, your children would be safe under the care of their heavenly Father. You cannot hope to see them all brought up; but the Lord will look to that. Trust this with Him, and be anxious for nothing. I shall very shortly leave my widow and children to our common Friend. It is well His promise is on our side; for there is no help in man, no dependence on him, either before our death or after it. My partner's heart towards you and your children, you know, is that of, my dear brother,

'Your ever affectionate

'Charles Wesley.'

Mr. Cownley's principal engagements after the death of his wife were preaching, study, and visiting the sick. In his favourite retirement, he spent the greatest part of his time in collecting

that agreeable variety which rendered his preaching so instructive, useful, and entertaining. He was seldom without his book. Blessed with a tenacious memory, he treasured up in his mind a fund of various knowledge; and in its application he consulted not the applause, but the essential benefit, of others. His conversation was without ornament; and it would have been difficult, unassisted by an intimate acquaintance; to discover any remarkable degree of information. He spoke but little in company, unless his opinion was called for; and then his observations were generally just, and frequently pertinent. His serious deportment, his conversation, his fervour in preaching and prayer, discovered him to be a pilgrim upon earth, seeking a city whose founder and builder is the Lord.

In 1780 he suffered another loss in his family by the death of his favourite son, Massiot Cownley. Convinced of the defects of his own, he spared no pains nor expense in the education of his son. At a proper age the young man was committed to the care of a surgeon in London, where his abilities promised a distinguished eminence in the profession. After the expiration of his apprenticeship, his disposition led him to the army, much against the inclination of his father, who suffered what he found it difficult to prevent. The piety and instructions of parents cannot always influence the conduct of children; and they have often to lament before God a temper and inclination destructive of present and everlasting happiness, which without effect they have

opposed. In 1779 Massiot was appointed surgeon of the Queen's Rangers, a regiment then raised by Colonel Stanton; and as he was put upon the staff of the regiment, he was secured in a provision for life. But, alas! he had scarce begun to act upon this theatre of dissipation, when his career was ended. His manners, though agreeable, were influenced by the maxims of this world; for by mixing with men of fashion and pleasure, he unfortunately imbibed their principles. It is said he fell in what is falsely called an affair of honour; but it was happy for his father that this circumstance, by the prudence of his children, was kept from his knowledge. Such an event as the death of Massiot was no small addition to his grief; and although he suffered like a Christian, he mourned over the loss of his son with all the tenderness of a parent.

At the Conference in 1788 Mr. Cownley was stationed in Edinburgh. In September he proceeded to that city, and began his labours, not, indeed, with the fire of youth, but the wisdom of age and experience; and although his popularity was not in proportion to his abilities, yet many of the children of God were confirmed and comforted by his ministry. In a letter to his friend Mrs. Carr he thus describes his journey and labours:

'EDINBURGH, *September* 17, 1788.

'MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

'GOD graciously brought me here, in about eighteen hours, without any accident happening all the way; though we were overtaken near the

end of our journey by a thunder-storm, which set a farm-house on fire, and killed several cattle. The lightning was most awful indeed. Happy they who have an interest in Him who gives winds and storms their commissions, and directs their courses as it pleaseth Him. I find my employment here is rather above my strength. A long lecture in the morning, and two sermons in the afternoon, is their ordinary on the Lord's day. I could do well with the lecture, and the last sermon, but the sermon after dinner distresses me much. Edinburgh is now one of the finest cities in Europe. For spacious streets, pompous buildings, and elegant squares, no place in Britain, except Bath, is to compare with it. Yet, after a while, all this pomp will perish. The earth and all that is in it will be consumed. But there is a city whose foundation is immovably fixed, whose builder and maker is God Himself. John's description of it exceeds all our thoughts; and in this city may you and I have our portion and our home. So prays

'Your ever affectionate friend,

'JOSEPH COWNLEY.'

His health at his first arrival in Edinburgh nearly continued the same. But, by an unaccustomed succession of labour, the pain in his head increased to such a degree of violence as to render him incapable of the duties of a regular preacher. His own account was: 'My work overpowers me on the Lord's day, and no one knows what I suffer with my wretched head. I preached on

Sunday about an hour, at the full extent of my voice, without bawling: I slept but little that night, and had some degree of fever, and the next day was very low.' He informed Mr. Wesley of his incapacity to endure the fatigues of his labour, who sympathized with his infirmities, and appointed him an assistant.

Mr. Cownley's ministry was not confined to Edinburgh. He visited Glasgow, Dunbar, and several other places in Scotland. In 1789 Mr. Jonathan Crowther came down to assist him. His respect for Mr. Cownley must not pass unnoticed. With a tenderness almost filial, he not only attended but anticipated his desires; preached for him when oppressed with pain, and helped to soothe a mind but too frequently overwhelmed with the gloom of disease. 'May God reward him!' was the prayer of his friend; and I am happy to record this example of disinterested affection. Mr. Cownley's continuance in Scotland had been very doubtful for some time, from the appearance of a fatal disorder and increasing debility, and at last became impossible. His labours were attended with so many unavoidable interruptions that he was preventing a more regular supply of preaching. After an ineffectual struggle, which he unwillingly communicated, it was the opinion of his friends, and a persuasion of the impolicy of his remaining, that determined his resolution to return to England. Such was his holy and fervent piety, his love to the blessed Redeemer, and the lively conviction of his call to preach

'the salvation of Jesus,' that nothing but absolute necessity could have influenced his return. And I am persuaded, from his enlightened apprehensions of the nature of inward religion, that for its success in the world, his soul ever glowed with an equal ardour, which years had not impaired nor weakness relaxed.

In the autumn of 1789 Mr. Cownley returned to Newcastle. Mr. Wesley at first expressed his disapprobation; but understanding that he had been attacked by the gout in his stomach, writes, 'I am fully satisfied by your last letter, you returned in good time.' He was received at Newcastle and its neighbourhood as one risen from the dead. He preached in the Orphan-House every Tuesday and Thursday evening, and frequently on the Lord's-day morning: this was from choice, as he cautiously avoided the large congregations; and this was his constant practice until his spirit returned to God.

In the former part of 1792 it was evident to many of his friends that he was ripening for eternity. The concerns of his everlasting state absorbed all his soul. In prayer with his family and friends, the tears flowed from his eyes, and his approaches to the throne of grace indicated the closest union with God. Indeed, life had no ties to retain him. He had outlived his first and many of his warmest friends; for most of those who had shared his friendship and divided his love he had seen carried to the grave. In the decline of life there is something melancholy in the loss of our earliest intimates, with whom our

weaknesses were familiar, and our thoughts ripened through experience into knowledge; whose hopes and fears, and general character, resembled our own. But to him futurity had prospects in reserve: though a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Perronet, had left him, yet it was not a separation for ever. 'This mortal being only can decay'; and the hopes of a blessed reunion cheered the approach of dissolution.

After the London Conference he continued as usual his visits to the neighbouring societies. In September, on his return from Hallington to Prudhoe, he caught cold, which brought on the complaint in his stomach. He preached in the greatest agonies of pain, both there and at Ovington. His last sermon was from Ps. cv. 3, 'Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord'; and with this, on the Lord's day, September 23, concluded the labours of near half a century. The following day he returned to Newcastle, and the surgeon of the family was sent for, but prescribed without effect. On my return from the country that evening, I found Mr. Cownley to all appearance approaching his dissolution. We proposed sending for a physician, which, at first, Mr. Cownley opposed, saying, 'No: my heavenly Father, He is the best Physician; He is my only Physician.' He then said, 'Lord, after all that I have done, I am the chief of sinners.' Soon after, I observed to him that the blood of the Redeemer was precious in our dying moments: he replied, 'O, precious! O, precious! What should I do but for that?'

Dr. Clarke then arrived, and, seeing him in the extreme of pain, said, 'Do not be afraid.' Mr. Cownley answered, 'The fear of death, sir, has long since been removed! I am not afraid to die, but I am afraid lest I should become impatient under this affliction.' When the physician withdrew, while the sweat fell in large drops from his face, he cried, with remarkable fervour, 'Jesus, I am Thine! Thou art my only Physician; but if it is Thy will, and I have finished the work Thou hast committed to me, then take me to Thyself.' He afterwards repeated, 'Lord, how little have I done for Thee! Lord, how little have I done for Thee!'

The doctor's prescriptions had an immediate effect, and the rigour of the disorder almost instantly abated. I sat up with him that night: he rested a little, and in the morning was free from the severity of the pain. Conversing with me the following day, with a countenance expressive of regret, he said, 'The doctor, by his timely applications, has brought me back into a world from which I should have been happy to escape.' As it was my fortnight to be in Newcastle, I visited him every day, and had not the least hope of a complete recovery. He had received a letter, previous to his illness, from Josiah Dornford, Esq.: a few days before his death he began an answer, which he never lived to finish. It is descriptive of his state and disorder; and will, I hope, be acceptable to the reader. As it was only a copy, there is no date nor address.

'I have been for some time past confined to my room with the gout in my stomach. I made an excursion into the country for a few weeks, and thought I had not been so well for a long time past; which, under God, I attributed to the little exercise I underwent in going from place to place, with the change of air; till on Friday evening before I came home I was seized with a pain in my breast which deprived me of three nights' rest; nor could I be excused preaching, ill as I was. On Monday I came home, and that evening the pain increased so much that I thought I should have sunk under it. What my apothecary ordered me did not in the least answer his design. My children insisted on calling in a physician, and we have in this town a very eminent one from Scotland. He was presently with me; and, after asking a few questions, ordered me a draught, and a blister on my breast. The Good Physician, I believe, directed him what to prescribe; for in less than half an hour after taking the medicine I found relief. I mend very slowly; for on any little exertion of my strength the pain returns; but on sitting down a while it ceases again. My appetite, which was quite gone, is much better, and I rest tolerably well; but how and when it will end I leave to Him in whose hands I am, and in whom is all my trust, and from whom is all my expectation. There is something very charming to me in those sweet lines of Dr. Watts:

Jesus, the vision of Thy face
Hath overpowering charms.
Scarce shall I feel Death's cold embrace,
If Thou art in my arms!'

As there appeared the most flattering symptoms of a perfect recovery, he spoke with the greatest pleasure of once more seeing us at the Orphan-House; but his hopes and our expectations were equally disappointed. The Lord's day before his decease the consolations of God were so sweet that his cup of joy ran over. 'I feel,' he said, 'such light and love in my heart, that if I were carried to the chapel, I could sit and preach to the people.' But his labours were ended; angels were ready to tune their harps, and the everlasting gates to lift up their heads, and admit a redeemed spirit into the regions of delight and happiness.

October 8, the day of his death, I sat with him for several hours. He conversed on a variety of subjects, with a vivacity that I have but seldom witnessed in his liveliest moments. A little after four o'clock I left him to fulfil an engagement with a friend; with difficulty I gained his consent, but promised to return immediately after preaching. It was the last farewell; and little did I think it was our final separation. Just as the service in the chapel was finished I received the message of his danger, and arrived in time to see his left eye close, and to feel the flutter of an expiring pulse. A few minutes after eight Mr. Cownley sat down to supper. His daughter Mary had withdrawn into an adjoining apartment: she heard a noise, returned, but he was speechless. The family were alarmed, his friends and the physician sent for, but all in vain. He reclined his head on the chair, and, without

a struggle or a groan, expired. It is impossible for me to describe the affliction of his children: their loss, indeed, was irreparable. Oh may they meet him at the resurrection of the just!

On Friday the corpse was brought into the chapel, and a discourse was delivered on the occasion to a numerous and afflicted audience from John v. 35: 'He was a burning and a shining light.' Then, attended by the singers, and a number of friends, his remains were carried to the Ballast Hills; where, amidst tears and sighs, I committed him to the dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.

I communicated the painful notice of his decease to several of his oldest friends. Mr. Hopper's answer is a tribute to his memory:

'BOLTON, *October* 13, 1792.

'Is my dear, dear, and well-beloved Cownley dead? No; he sleepeth. Who can tell what my poor heart feels? I see the whole scene, from his first meeting Miss Massiot, in the city of Cork, to this precious moment. A serious drama indeed. The dream is ended; this momentary life is over; he is no more, no more here, no more in Newcastle. His body rests on the Ballast Hills, and his soul in the bosom of the Lord. Farewell, dear brother Cownley! I shall hear and see thee no more on the stage of this mortal life; but I hope I shall soon behold thee among the glorified saints in the celestial Jerusalem, the city of our great God. There, there we shall meet to part no more. Glory be to God, I am

the next man on the list. Time passeth, death approacheth, the Judge standeth at the door, and eternity is come. May I, may you, may all be ready! Amen, and amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

'Your affectionate brother,

'CHRISTOPHER HOPPER.'

Thus lived and died Joseph Cownley; a man, though with defects common to all men, one of the fairest characters I ever knew. His mind was capable of the most abstruse investigations; and had he improved in proportion to his mental resources, he must have secured the reputation of genius and learning, as well as that of a minister and a Christian. His abilities as a public speaker have been appreciated by an unsuspected and competent judge. Mr. Wesley did not hesitate to say, 'He is one of the best preachers in England.' His discourses, though generally plain, were distinct and argumentative; not daubed by the mere finery of phrase, nor ornamented by affected sublimity: he pleased more by the gravity and force of his sentiments than by the elegance or graces of his style. But, what is far better, by an enlivening pathos he reached the heart, and inspired love to God and benevolence to man. He was averse to a noisy and uncertain popularity. His ambition was not to be distinguished but to be useful; and, although he gained the applause of the serious, he never sought the admiration of the multitude. He dreaded extremes. His piety was rational,

equally removed from formality and enthusiasm; and, as his affections were in heaven, his opinions were regulated, not by the impulse of a moment, but the revelation of God. His learning was confined, though his knowledge was extensive. He had travelled 'history's enormous round'; and there are but few books on divinity in the English language but what he had read. From a disposition naturally reserved, he conversed but little in company. His manners were uniform, without the austerities of an ascetic, or the affected singularities of the mystic. He united the solemn with the familiar, and was at once cheerful and serious. As his feelings were nicely sensible, his humanity was almost an extreme; and if in anything he bordered on extravagance, it was in his treatment of the brute creation. But this was a failing which seeks no extenuation and solicits no forgiveness; for we cannot but admire the man who can say,

> No dying brute I view in anguish here,
> But from my melting eye descends a tear.

Though constantly afflicted, his tempers were not embittered by disease, nor soured by impatience; and he endured with submission what had baffled the skill of man and the powers of medicine. Improper complaint seldom escaped his lips; and when on the rack of pain, his language was, 'The will of the Lord be done.' In his walk as a Christian, his meekness was remarkable. For upwards of forty years he had scarcely an enemy; and when, towards the close of life, he was disturbed by one who had been his friend, his

severest remark was, 'I did not think he would have used me so.' An unwillingness to offend has sometimes exposed him to the suspicion of irresolution. But it must be remembered that he dreaded the consequences of argument and debate; for experience had convinced him that his feelings were too susceptible for a pointed opposition. Hurt at the least appearance of discord, whenever it occurred he instantly departed, and no persuasion could influence his return. If on some occasions this was not agreeable, we cannot but approve the motive; and happy would it be for society were all men influenced by his principles. Part of his time was held sacred to the poor. He sought out the asylums of wretchedness; in comforting the mourners, establishing the pious, and rousing the careless,

> He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
> Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

His union with the Redeemer was almost uninterrupted. His was not a transient, but a constant flame. As God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, so he walked in the light as He is in the light; and the life which he lived was by faith in the Son of God. His love to his brethren and the church of God is as worthy of imitation as it is above all praise. Nothing could alienate his affections—neither the certainty of labour nor the promises of reward; his heart was fixed, and he said, 'This people shall be my people, and their God shall be mine.' He had the clearest ideas of the religion of Jesus, and an engaging method of communicating those

conceptions. Hundreds of careless sinners were awakened under his ministry, and he is the father of many spiritual children; children who are still living to God, though many sleep in Jesus. Persuasion hung upon his lips, and at times he appeared to speak with an authority more than human. Alternately he was a son of thunder and of consolation. By the terrors of the Lord he persuaded men, and by the application of the promises he confirmed the wavering and comforted the doubting believer. His end was the consequent issue of his life. Death had lost its terrors. He loved that which is the dread of the impious. He said, 'It is better for me to be dissolved, that I may be with Jesus'; and, without a struggle or a groan, he committed his soul into the hands of his faithful Creator. In him the church lost a faithful pastor, his children a parent of indescribable tenderness, and the world a burning and a shining light.

The principal facts here given were communicated by Mr. Cownley, and confirmed by his papers, though he kept no journal of his travels or experience. I am perfectly satisfied that I have at least endeavoured to rescue from oblivion a man whose memory will be no disgrace to Methodism; and, our enemies being judges, whose life and conversation would have done credit to any society. Oh may my life and death be like his!

JOHN GAULTER.

ALNWICK, *May* 24, 1794.

WILLIAM HUNTER

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.[1]

August 18, 1779.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

According to your desire, I take the opportunity to write a little of the dealings of God with me; but as I have not kept any account in writing, many things have slipped my mind.

I was born in Northumberland, at a little village near Plessey, in the year 1728. I was put to school early, and taught to read the Scriptures from a child; but delighted most in the historical parts of them. I felt a degree of the fear of God when very young, and sweet drawings of love. Sometimes the thoughts of death were very dreadful to me, so that I felt very unhappy. I once dreamed that Satan came to me, and would have me; when I waked, I was full of fear, and prayed much that I might be delivered from him; and the impressions abode upon my mind for many days: but as I had nobody to teach me the right way of coming to Christ, these good impressions gradually wore off.

When I was about fourteen, my father being a farmer, I was put to learn all the branches of farming. My father was very severe with me, and I dreaded him much: and yet I was often guilty of much disobedience against him; for

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1779, p. 589.

which I have been much ashamed before the Lord.

The first time you came to Plessey, I, with several of my father's family, came to hear you: some of my brothers were much taken with you, and, I trust, will have cause to bless God for it for ever.

When I was about sixteen, I heard Mr. Hopper: as soon as he began to speak, his words affected me deeply, not with terror, but with love. I had a taste of heaven; it seemed as though I was created anew; there was a wonderful change in my tempers and conduct; I laid aside everything that I thought was contrary to the will of God, and practised all religious duties. I attended preaching on all occasions, and felt much sweetness therein, and love to those that I believed were devoted to God.

I went on in this way for some time, till my companions began to take notice of me, and call me Methodist. Some of them set upon me one Sunday, and cursed and swore bitterly at me, telling me I was going to leave the Church and the religion I was brought up in. This had a strange effect upon me. I gave way to them: they prevailed upon me to go to the alehouse; there I was overtaken by my old sins again. The Spirit of the Lord departed from me: my heart became as hard as a stone. Darkness covered my mind again, and I was as senseless to the things of God as though I had never known anything at all about them.

I went on in this wretched state many months, living totally without God in the world. Through

the advice of a young man, I went to hear preaching again. A great light was communicated to my understanding by the word, and it pierced my conscience like a sword. I felt my inward parts to be very wickedness; all the sins of my life stared me in the face, and lay as a heavy burden upon my conscience. I roared for disquietness of heart, and wept and made supplication. I was convinced I could not help myself, that I could not do anything to reconcile myself to God; and I had many fears lest the day of grace was past. Oh the distress of soul I went through for many months! It was as though I had been forsaken of God, and hell was already begun in me. But the Lord was pleased to give me power over sin. I forsook every sinful way, and all my sinful companions. I sought the Lord with all my heart in all the means of grace. I attended preaching on all occasions, and read the Scriptures with great diligence: the way of salvation, revealed therein through Christ, was made clear to me; and I pledged nothing but the merits of Christ for forgiveness. I often rose in the night to read and pray; and the language of my heart was,

> If I ne'er find the sacred road,
> I'll perish crying out for God.

I felt great love to the Methodists, especially to the preachers, as the servants of the most high God, sent to teach us the way of salvation. The people took notice of me, talked with me, and wished me to cast in my lot amongst them. I did so, though I did not think myself worthy; and I bless God I have never felt a desire to leave

them since. I continued mourning after the Lord, and at length He heard my cry. One day, as I remember, I was reading in a book, where the writer was answering that objection concerning the day of grace being past : the Lord was pleased to send me deliverance ; I found springing hope, and a sense of His goodness. How did I admire the love of God and the love of Jesus Christ to me ! All my thoughts were swallowed up in heavenly contemplation ; and I could truly say, 'The Lord is my life and my salvation ; whom shall I fear? Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me.'

I now tried what the Spirit had wrought in me by the marks laid down in Holy Scripture ; and hence I found reason to believe that I belonged to Christ, and was a child of God. I made a free-will offering of all I had, to be His for ever ; and I thank Him, from the ground of my heart, that I have been kept in the same mind to this day ; though I have great cause to be ashamed that I have made no better improvement, and often mourn and weep on that account.

When I had thus found the goodness of God to my own soul, I could not forbear speaking of it to others ; and the Lord gave me wonderful light and courage in His blessed work. He helped me to reprove sin, wherever I met with it, with humility, meekness, and much prayer ; yet without fearing the face of any man ; though many said I was out of my mind, yea, and wished me out of the world. The Lord enabled me to set my face as a flint, and to bear a testimony for

Him wherever I went ; and I was much blessed in so doing.

There was a little town not far from ours, where I sometimes went, got a few poor people together, and talked to them about their souls. I often read the Scriptures to them, and sometimes made some remarks thereon. The Lord was pleased to bless my weak endeavours among them ; so that a few of them gathered together, and the preacher joined them in a society, and put me in to be the leader. I met with many trials in this little way, and was often tempted to give it up ; but I durst not.

I used to travel far on the Lord's day, to hear the word of God. If it happened the preacher did not come, I was pressed upon to give an exhortation to the people. This I frequently did ; but I often went home distressed to the last degree through a deep sense of my own unworthiness : yet it was not always so. At other times I was happy and lively, having strong evidence that I was doing the will of God.

Meantime several of the preachers spoke to me about travelling ; but the importance of the work made me afraid, till in the year 1767, at the London Conference, Mr. Rowell recommended me, and I was taken in upon trial. I was then appointed for the Barnard Castle Circuit, and entered upon my work with great fear ; there seemed many difficulties in my way ; however, I gave myself up to the Lord, and He was pleased to give me favour in the eyes of the people.

Two years after I was stationed in Yarm

Circuit. I was afterwards appointed to Barnard Castle Circuit again; and God was pleased to bless my labour, with that of the other preachers. We had such a work of God in several parts of this circuit as I never saw. Hardly anything of the kind in England had exceeded it, both with regard to its swiftness and depth: the power of God bore all down before it, and it seemed as if God was about to convert all the world.

After I left this circuit I was placed at Hull, then at York, and afterwards in the Scarborough Circuit. We had a gracious increase of the work of God here; and I never found more enlargement of heart. We broke up much fresh ground, took in many new places, and many souls were converted to God. The last year you appointed me for the Thirsk Circuit. This has been a year of trial; but the Lord has stood by me, and I am strengthened.

What success I may have for time to come, I cannot tell. It is still my one desire to give myself wholly to the Lord, and to His blessed work. I wish to live to better purpose than I have yet done; to be more fruitful in His house, and in the world. I am conscious of many defects in myself, and feel my need of Christ every moment. My soul hangs upon Him, and I experience salvation from day to day; and I trust He that has kept me till now will keep me to the end.

Wishing you all peace and prosperity, I remain, Rev. and dear sir,

Your affectionate son in the gospel of Christ,

WILLIAM HUNTER.

He wrote from Richmond, August 29, 1779:

Concerning the account I gave you at London, as I writ it in haste, I believe it is very imperfect: several things have occurred to my mind since which I should have put in if I had then remembered them.

As touching that greater salvation, being saved from inbred sin, I shall simply relate what I know of the dealings of God with me in this respect.

For some time after I knew the goodness of God to my soul, I was very happy; I sung in His ways for joy of heart, and His consolations were not small in me. I thought, indeed, I should learn war no more. It was then

I rode on the sky,
Freely justified I,
Nor envied Elijah his seat;
My soul mounted higher
In a chariot of fire,
And the moon it was under my feet.

Jesus all the day long
Was my joy and my song;
O that all His salvation may see!
He hath loved me, I cried,
He hath suffered and died,
To redeem such a rebel as me.

But afterwards it pleased Infinite Wisdom to open a new scene to me. I began to be exercised with many uncommon temptations, and felt my own heart ready to comply with the same: this brought me into great straits, and I began to call in question the work of grace in my soul. Oh the pain and anguish I felt for weeks together! Yet all this while I was very earnest with the Lord,

my soul clave to Him, and I often said, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' Under this exercise I learned several things. As, first, that my nature was not so much changed as I thought: I found many things in me which opposed the grace of God; so that, without continual watching and prayer, I was capable of committing the very same sins which I had been guilty of before. (2) I began to be more acquainted with Satan's devices, and found power from God to resist them. (3) I had very affecting views of Christ as my great High-Priest, who was touched with a feeling of all my infirmities. (4) The Scriptures were precious to me, and I found great comfort in reading them. And, lastly, I was conscious of the need of a far greater change in my nature than I had yet experienced. But I then read mostly the Calvinists' writings, who all write that sin must be in believers till death; yet I found my mind at times deeply engaged in prayer to be saved from all sin.

Thus I went on for a long time, sometimes up and sometimes down, till it pleased God to bring me to hear you at Newcastle. You preached, I well remember, from the First Epistle of John, i. 9: 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' This was a precious time to me. While you were preaching, a divine light shone in upon my heart with the word, and I was clearly convinced of the doctrine of sanctification, and the attainableness of it. I came home with full purpose of heart not to rest till I was

made a living witness of it. I had now a clear view (1) Of the holiness of God; and saw that sin could not dwell with Him. (2) I had a clear view of the purity and perfection of His law, which is a transcript of the divine nature. And (3) I felt my great unlikeness to both; and, although I felt no condemnation, yet, in the view of these things, I felt much pain in my spirit, and my soul was humbled in the dust before Him! Oh how I longed to be made like Him; to love Him with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength! I had glorious discoveries of the grand provision made in the new covenant for the complete salvation of the soul; and I went on in joyful expectation, crying to the Lord to put me in possession of all He had purchased for me, and promised to me. Sometimes I seemed to be upon the threshold, just stepping into glorious liberty; but again fear and unbelief prevailed, and I started back. This cast my mind into great perplexity, and I often reasoned concerning the truth of the thing.

It would be tedious to relate the various exercises I went through for several years, without opening my mind to any one. I do not remember that I ever conversed with one upon the subject, or ever heard any one discourse upon it. Only, I think, about eighteen years ago, it pleased God that I heard Mr. Olivers preach a sermon upon the subject. His text was, 'Let us go on unto perfection.' His doctrine was clear and his arguments strong. My heart consented to the whole truth, and I had clearer views of the way

of attaining it, namely, by faith, than ever before. This added new vigour to my spirit, and I seemed to be more on the wing than ever. I prayed and wept at His footstool, that He would show me all His salvation. And He gave me to experience such a measure of His grace as I never knew before; a great measure of heavenly light and divine power spread through all my soul; I found unbelief taken away out of my heart; my soul was filled with such faith as I never felt before; my love to Christ was like fire, and I had such views of Him, as my life, my portion, my all, as swallowed me up; and oh how I longed to be with Him! A change passed upon all the powers of my soul, and I felt a great increase of holy and heavenly tempers. I may say, with humility, it was as though I was emptied of all evil, and filled with heaven and God.

Thus, under the influence of His power and grace, I rode upon the sky. My soul fed on angels' food, and I truly ate the bread of heaven. I had more glorious discoveries than ever of the gospel of God our Saviour, and especially in His saving the soul from all sin. I enjoyed such an evidence of this in my own mind as put me beyond all doubt; and yet I never had such a sense of my own littleness, helplessness, and unworthiness as now. So true it is that only grace can humble the soul.

From the time the Lord gave me to experience this grace, I became an advocate for the glorious doctrine of Christian perfection; according to the gift He has been pleased to give me, I bear a testimony of it wherever I go; and I never find

my soul so happy as when I preach most upon the blessed subject.

Thus I have simply related what I know of the work of God in my heart. I desire to give Him all the glory. But I have great cause to be ashamed before Him for my unfaithfulness. I feel I need His grace every moment. I stand by faith; I have as much need of Christ as ever; I may truly say,

> Every moment, Lord, I want
> The merit of Thy death.

Glory be to His name, I find my soul united to Him, and my heart cries, 'None but Christ!' I am kept by His power; I enjoy salvation; my heart is fixed, my anchor is sure and steadfast. I believe nothing shall separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

I conclude with saying, Though the whole of our salvation is from the Lord, yet He deals with us as rational creatures. He gives us light and conviction of our lost state; then the heart is humbled, and the soul bows before Him. He then speaks peace. This is done in a moment, and faith in the soul is the root of all Christian holiness. Thus the work of sanctification is begun in the heart, and the person is in a capacity of living to God, and growing in grace. If He finds us faithful in a little, He shows us there is a state of greater liberty provided for us. The soul being open to the divine teaching, He shows us our want of this. We seek it with our whole heart, and He is pleased to put us in possession of it. This too

is generally given in a moment, and perfectly frees the mind from all evil tempers, and enables us to love the Lord with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Being thus perfected in love, we are much more qualified to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ than ever. O precious salvation! let me ever be a witness of it!

Mr. Thomas Dodd sent Mr. Mather this account of Mr. Hunter's last affliction and death:

On the 17th of July, 1797, Mr. Hunter came to my house, having previously wrote him to come and take care of the society at Nenthead in my absence, being then at Tynemouth for the benefit of my health. When I came home on the 27th, I was struck with Mr. Hunter's appearance, which was greatly altered from the last time I saw him, which was on the 13th of April. On inquiring how he was, he said, 'Very poorly'; and intimated he was much exhausted by meeting the classes, and preaching twice on the Sunday before. At night he preached for the last time, from Matt. xxiv. 44, 'Be ye also ready'; and made many excellent remarks upon the subject, to which the people seriously attended, as unto the words of a dying man. In the morning he looked refreshed and pleasant, though very weak, and in the course of the day frequently walked out with me; but towards evening he began to breathe with difficulty. About one o'clock in the morning he called us up, and said, 'I am almost dead.' I was greatly affected with his humble, quiet, composed confidence in God. The preacher

and the Christian shone with peculiar lustre: it was evident that he possessed what he had long been with holy fervour inculcating upon others.

In the morning he got up about nine o'clock, and came downstairs; but it was too plain that his dissolution was approaching apace. On the 30th he breathed with less difficulty, and the fever was much abated; which I attributed to his drinking plentifully of lemonade. When he spoke, which was but seldom, his words were solemn and affecting. On Monday, the 31st, he frequently forgot himself, and had various symptoms of death about him. I was afraid he would lose his senses for want of sleep, having had none for four or five days. August 1st, he frequently said, 'I am a monument of God's goodness: glory be unto His name for ever and ever!' In the evening he said, 'The Lord is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation'; and added, 'The Lord be praised for ever and ever.' 'I am a monument of God's rich mercy.' I asked, 'If you die with us, shall a funeral sermon be preached on the occasion?' He answered, 'Yes, and you must preach it.' I requested he would name a portion of Scripture. After a short pause, he said, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day' (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). A person present happening to say, 'Mr. Hunter gets no sleep'; he replied, 'Sleeping or

waking, all is well: glory be to God for ever!' About ten he gave out his favourite hymn,

I long to behold Him arrayed.

He then prayed with great fervour.

On the 2nd the pins of the tabernacle seemed to slacken apace, and the pitcher was ready to break at the fountain, and all the animal powers were almost exhausted, and refused to do their respective offices. In the evening, when I sat down by him, he frequently took my hand in his, and attempted to say something respecting the divine law, but was not able to speak. At length he cried out aloud, 'Glory be to God, He has fulfilled all righteousness! If this was not included in His obedience, it would be imperfect; and then what should we do?' His whole salvation he rested on the merits of the Redeemer. While the bed was making, he sat in a chair, and desired we would sing the above-mentioned hymn; which was done in a solemn manner, during which his happy soul was swallowed up in the love of God. He then prayed with an holy fervour and devotion suitable to the occasion. About one o'clock in the morning we were called up to see him die; but he got over this struggle, and lay in quiet slumbers till eight o'clock. When I entered the room, he said, 'There is much to do before we can die; but I have no fear; my whole heart is devoted to God; I have not followed cunningly-devised fables.' When any persons came to see him, he was very particular in recommending to them the service of God, with all its

attendant comforts; nor did he suffer any to depart without pouring out his solemn benediction upon them. He frequently repeated Mr. Wesley's hymn,[1]

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath.

He would then burst into tears of joy; and, taking my hand and kissing it, said, 'Oh how I love you, my brother!' Coming out of a short slumber, and fixing his eyes on the opposite side of the room, he cried out, 'Precious Christ! precious Jesus! What a sight is this! A poor unworthy creature dying, full of faith and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Adding,

A feeble saint shall win the day,
Though death and hell obstruct the way.

When he was raised up to drink a little wine-and-water, he said with an air of holy triumph, 'O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?' In the evening he attempted frequently to whisper something weighty respecting the goodness of God; and got out, 'Offer me up to God in prayer.' About nine o'clock he whispered in my ear, 'Pray and praise.' And indeed, when we prayed in his presence, the glory of God filled the place. He would often whisper, 'When will my Lord come?' and when I observed, 'God's time is a good time,' he replied, 'All is well; all is well.'

On Saturday, when I entered the room, he took my hand, but could not speak. Asking him if he felt much pain, he laid his hand upon his right

[1] Wesley sang this hymn of Dr. Watts' on his death-bed.

breast. Through the whole of Mr. Hunter's affliction there appeared such perfect resignation to the will of God that I durst not pray for life or death; but that God would treat His servant according to the good pleasure of His unerring goodness. On Wednesday he desired that the preachers might be informed of his case and situation. I asked if he meant the preachers then assembled in Conference. He replied, 'All of them: let them know I have never varied from the Methodist doctrine and discipline, from my first setting out.' Whenever he had an interval of ease, he discovered much patience and humility, and was a pleasing ornament of his profession. On the 9th, after prayer in the evening, as I was sitting by him, I happened to say, 'What has the world to call happiness, compared to this?' not thinking that he heard me; but he replied, 'It is all a cheat.' I then asked if he had much pain. He laid his hand as usual on his right breast, and said, 'But all is well.' His whole deportment fully evidenced undissembled piety and true godliness. On Thursday my wife asked him if he was desirous of being gone. He answered, 'I am passive.' He said little more till the evening, when all the powers of his soul seemed deeply engaged with God and eternal things.

On Saturday morning, the 12th, at four o'clock, those who sat up with him called us up to see him depart. When I entered the room, I asked if he knew me. He whispered, 'Yes.' I said, 'Is God present with you?' He replied three times, 'Oh

yes.' Upon wetting his lips, he said, 'Glory be to God! We should praise Him for everything.' In the evening he took a cup of cocoa; and, after changing his linen, he was blessed with an interval of ease, and looked pleasant and cheerful. I read to him, in a slow soft manner, the 32nd and 35th chapters of Isaiah; and observed on the conclusion, 'How beautiful is the Word of the Lord!' He lifted up his hands and eyes, and cried, 'May all the ends of the earth praise Him!' Sunday, the 13th, he appeared on the threshold of eternity. I said to him, 'Sir, you are very weak this morning.' 'Yes,' he replied; 'but the Lord is strong: glory be to His precious name for ever!' In the evening he nearly fainted. When he opened his eyes, he whispered, 'All is well: there is nothing wrong.' When I prayed by him, he was perfectly sensible, and exerted his remaining strength in hearty amens. I put my hand into his, when leaving the room, and asked if he knew me. He answered, in a broken whisper, 'Very well.' He then, as well as he was able, blessed the children present, and exhorted them to seek the Lord. About four in the morning of the 14th I was hastily called; and after being a few minutes in the room, the happy spirit of this blessed man of God took its flight into the regions of eternal repose. Thus died, as he had lived, Mr. William Hunter, full of divine peace, love, and joy. During the seventeen days of his affliction the enemy was not permitted to approach him, for perfect love cast out fear; and, in the fullest sense of the word, he rejoiced ever-

more, prayed without ceasing, and in everything gave thanks unto God. I said in my heart, and with my whole heart, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord! Let my last end be like his!'

NENTHEAD, ALSTON MOOR,
September 6, 1797.

An affectionate friend wrote:

DEAR SIR, *October* 6, 1797.

Hearing a letter read this morning, which gave a relation of the happy and peaceful departure of Mr. Hunter, whose ministry I sat under at York in the years 1773 and 1774, it brought to my mind several circumstances relating to that blessed man, which, upon further consideration, I thought might be useful and acceptable, not only to his numerous friends in various parts of England and Scotland, where he laboured with great fidelity and uprightness, but likewise to all who desire to follow him as he followed Christ.

At the time of my first acquaintance with him, he enjoyed much of the power of religion, as his spirit and temper, as well as his conversation and preaching, abundantly demonstrated. I remember to have heard him say that when he first entered upon the laborious work of a Methodist preacher, his discourses were confined chiefly to the first principles of religion, exhorting and inviting sinners to repent, and pointing them to Jesus Christ, in order that they might obtain, through faith, the pardon of their sins. But

after a season his mind was more engaged in building up believers in their most holy faith, and showing them the way, both by precept and example, of obtaining deliverance from their evil tempers, and increasing in holiness of heart and life.

You doubtless remember that his understanding in the things of God was truly enlightened, and his method of expressing himself was solid and weighty, which gave additional force to the arguments he produced in favour of godliness, so that they sunk deep into the minds of those who heard him. His expressions were plain and strong, accompanied with genuine simplicity, and such a sense of the importance of his office, that few could hear him without being impressed by the subject which he treated upon. The same serious deportment which he maintained in the pulpit he supported wherever he went. His speech indeed was slow and deliberate, but without any affectation. Heavenly wisdom dropped from his lips, and manifested that his piety was uniform, and that he lived and walked in the Spirit ; so that, whether in the pulpit or in private conversation, he was always the same. In his intercourse with the people, his great object was their edification, always leading the conversation to something suitable to the state they were in. I may say, with the strictest propriety, that he was a wise master builder in the church of Christ, and well acquainted with divine things, which he had learned from the Holy Scriptures as well as from his own experience, and the know-

ledge he acquired of the temptations, trials, and afflictions which others had gone through. These qualifications rendered his visits among us very useful. We never were favoured with his company without receiving some benefit. He either discovered to us the devices of Satan; or more clearly pointed out the way of faith; or unfolded some part of Christian experience with which we were unacquainted. He faithfully laboured to strengthen the weak hands, and to confirm the feeble knees. I may likewise add that his fellow labourer in the work trod in the same excellent path; which rendered our intercourse with them exceedingly profitable. Our hearts were softened, and our desires continually enlarged, to obtain further degrees of redeeming love. By these happy means we were strengthened and encouraged to persevere in the good way, and improve the divine impressions we received from time to time under the word.

Mr. Hunter's deportment was grave and serious, without any mixture of lightness or trifling. His humility shone in a variety of instances. When in the company of his brethren the preachers, his unassuming and modest carriage before them showed that he preferred each in honour to himself. It seemed as if he continually recollected our Lord's words, 'He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.' He confined his labours chiefly to the flock over which he was appointed; never appearing forward to engage in anything where he thought himself not par-

ticularly called. Hence, although he was united to the Methodists in the closest and most affectionate union, yet he very seldom took any active part in the Connexion, except that of bringing sinners to God through faith in Christ, and building up believers in peace and purity.[1]

In looking over some of my papers, I found the following remarks from a sermon of Mr. Hunter's, preached in the year 1781, on Christian holiness. Whether I had committed them to writing at the time I heard him preach, or procured them from some friend, I cannot now recollect; but I beg leave to transcribe them, hoping they may be useful to those who are desirous of obtaining purity of heart. The discourse was upon Heb. vi. 1. After exhorting believers to go on to perfection, Mr. Hunter observed that 'without this, we cannot increase in the divine life, nor obtain a becoming meetness for glory. When our eye is fixed on Christ, and all the powers of the mind are engaged in this great and blessed exercise, then the work of sanctification is carried on in all its parts. Sin grows weaker and weaker; divine love spreads through the soul. Faith grows; and the love of God and man increases. In this temper of mind, the believer pants after the full enjoyment of God, and earnestly prays for the accomplishment of His great and precious promises. Thus, in the exercise of his talents, and

[1] Mr. Hunter spent several years in the south of Scotland, and preached in many towns and villages where Methodists had never been. For an account of the trials he passed through at this period, and his remarkable dream, see Atmore's *Methodist Memorial*, pp. 209–13.

in the use of all the means of grace, the blessed moment comes; the soul lays hold of this, or some similar promise, by the strong arm of faith, "I will save you from all your uncleannesses." The Holy Spirit spreads His powerful influences through the heart, like a refiner's fire, and burns up, root and branch, all the remains of indwelling sin. The Lord speaks to the heart, "Thou art Mine: I have redeemed thee." The great mountain of corruption is at once removed. The soul enters into its holy habitation; it lives and rests in God; and continually says, "Here will I dwell; for I have desired it." When we enter into this great and glorious liberty, the Lord enlarges our capacity, and enables us to make swifter progress in the divine life. There is a gradual work carried on in the soul after the evils are destroyed, so that we may say to all believers, "Grow in grace; and go on to higher degrees of evangelical purity." We receive no new gift, but larger measures of the same love and grace, which prepare and fit us for eternal life. His commands are not grievous; but we delight in doing and suffering His blessed will. There are many graces which the Lord communicates to His people, the value of which we should never know if we were not called to suffer with Christ: but while we continue looking to the Lord, and exercising the talents imparted, they increase abundantly; and we learn to put every trial we meet with among those things that work together for our good. Thus the believer takes up his cross, and goes on through evil report and good report;

not seeking the esteem of men, but always endeavouring to keep a good conscience and approve himself to God. In this state no distracting fears or doubts can depress the mind, either with regard to its present or future welfare.'

I am, dear brother, yours in Christ,

F. P.

RICHARD RODDA

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.[1]

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I was born in the year of our Lord 1743, in the parish of Sancreed, in the county of Cornwall. My parents had no great share of this world's goods; yet were esteemed by all who knew them for their honesty and industry. My mother feared God; but, being a stranger to His method of justifying sinners, she went about to establish her own righteousness.

When the Methodists came into Cornwall preaching repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, she was whole, and needed not the Physician. And as evil reports were soon spread abroad concerning the Methodists, she and my father readily believed all that was said against them. Accordingly, they kept their distance, and considered them as enemies both to Church and State.

However, my sister, who was the eldest of ten children, ventured to hear; and God fastened His word in her conscience, as a nail in a sure place. On this she sunk down at the feet of Jesus and implored mercy, who in a short time turned her sorrow into joy. As this change was visible, it induced my mother to hear for herself. It was not long before God stripped her of her

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1784, p. 289.

self-righteousness. His arrows drank up her spirits, and His hand pressed her sore. For three weeks she cried unto the Lord, as out of the deep; at the end of which, being on the brink of despair, He set her soul at liberty in a moment, and enabled her to say, 'Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me!' From this time she was diligent in the means of grace, and did what she could to bring up her children in the fear of God.

One of the first things I remember was my old grandmother praying to God with lifted hands and eyes, as she passed into the other world.

When I was about four years old, as I was lying on the ground, and looking up to heaven, I thought I saw the form of a large tree. While I gazed on it, something inwardly said, 'That is the tree of life.' This was before I could read, or even knew a letter.

When I was six years of age, the Spirit of God frequently strove with me; and sometimes I was so distressed I knew not what to do. Yet I learned my book very well; and could repeat to my parents at night great part of what I had read by day.

About the year 1750 the gospel was preached in my father's house. I loved to hear it, and strove to get as near the preacher as I could. Soon after this my mother fell into a deep consumption. She was brought so low that she could not walk across the room. After many things had been tried in vain, she was perfectly restored by making a hole in the ground, and breathing into it for a quarter of an hour every morning.

When I was seven years old, I felt the drawings of the Father, and the operation of His blessed Spirit on my heart. The preachers that came to our house often spoke to me concerning my soul; and their instructions were not in vain: they often distilled on my heart as dew on the tender herbs. But after this I lived in a family which had not so much as the form of godliness. And as they encouraged me in every vice, my good desires and serious impressions so far vanished that I could laugh, and tell lies, without fear or remorse.

One day, as I was riding on full gallop in company with several others, my horse threw me over his head, and then quite leaped over me; and though another horse coming close behind did the same, yet I received no hurt! Surely the tender mercy of God preserved me, or I had gone quick into the pit! Soon after this the kind providence of God brought me back to my father's house, and I was sent to work in the tin-mines. From this time God began to work effectually on my heart.

In the year 1756 the Lord showed me that my inward parts were very wickedness. I saw that my heart was a sink of pollution, and that my past life condemned me. When I heard a certain preacher in St. Just, I thought, as soon as he began, he could not have much to say; but before he had done, I thought he kept his eye continually on me, while everything he said seemed to point at me I could hardly bear it, and had some thoughts of moving to another

part of the house, where he might not see me. But I soon found it was God who was applying His word to my heart.

From this time strong convictions followed me: and though I was often drawn away with sinful companions, yet my conscience terrified me, and drove me to the feet of Christ to implore forgiveness. My mother greatly helped me by her prayers and admonitions; as did also my two elder brothers, who about this time found peace with God.

I now applied to Mr. Jaco for admission into the society. He gave me leave to meet, but only as a probationer: I suppose, because he thought me too young to be admitted. Nevertheless, I constantly met in class; and some time after, when you, sir, called over the society at Newlyn, I was received into the Connexion.

I was near two years seeking rest for my soul. Sometimes I thought God would never show me His mercy, at others I hoped He would. Sometimes I was alarmed by terrors, at others I was drawn by love. God is witness how often I have watered my pillow with tears, and risen at midnight to pour out my soul before Him! One time in particular, I was in such trouble that I thought God was frowning over me, and that hell moved from beneath to meet me. Once, a very wicked boy being in company with me, as I walked the road, I was constrained to fall on my knees, and cry aloud for mercy; for every step I took, I feared I should drop into everlasting burnings.

About the beginning of June, 1758, while I was

praying in my father's house, and earnestly entreating God to write forgiveness on my heart, the following words darted into my soul: 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.' In that instant my burden was removed, and my soul was filled with peace and joy. But I soon doubted whether this was what many termed 'justification'; and as I had always a fear of deceiving myself, the enemy soon reasoned me out of my happiness, and my soul seemed as far from the blessing as ever.

On the 11th of that month, while Benjamin Trembath was praying by me, God gave me a clear sense of His forgiving love. There was not the least doubt remaining of my acceptance through the Beloved. For many days and weeks I was enabled to rejoice in God my Saviour. Every duty was profitable, as it conveyed to me fresh tokens of the divine favour. My understanding was opened to behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in creating, upholding, and governing the world. I saw that the whole earth was full of His majesty and glory. But what most astonished me was the wondrous greatness of redeeming love. To behold the Ancient of days become an infant! the Filler of immensity contracted to a span! the Lord of heaven and earth taking upon Him the form of a servant, and, after fulfilling all righteousness, bowing His blessed head on the cross, to save His avowed enemies! these considerations filled me with love and gratitude, which I expressed in the following lines:

Praise God, my soul, whose wondrous love
Hath drawn thy thoughts to things above,
Where Jesus ever reigns:
Let every sinful, wand'ring thought
Be into full subjection brought,
Till freed from sin's remains.

Many times that text ran in my mind, 'I shall never be moved; the Lord of His goodness hath made my hill so strong.' I thought my enemies were all dead, and that my warfare was accomplished. How little did I know at that time of the Christian conflict, or the deep import of these words, 'Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but to suffer for His sake!'

Through unwatchfulness I fell into levity (a besetting evil), and Satan strove to tear away my shield; but though God suffered him not to do it, yet my joy was greatly damped. My unwatchfulness cost me many an aching heart; and I found I had most need to watch when in company with professors; where, not suspecting harm, I was often overtaken before I was aware.

About the year 1759, when I was forty fathoms under ground, by a miracle I was saved from being drowned in three fathoms of water. Oh the tender mercy of God in preserving me! Surely the angel of His presence saved me; through whose help I continue unto this day!

Not long after, I was seized with a fever, and brought very near the gates of death. My soul longed to take her flight, and struggled, like a bird in a cage, to obtain its liberty.

One day my friends thought I was dead, and

one of my brothers informed my mother that I was passed into the other world. And I thought myself that my soul had actually left the body, and was mounting upwards, like a bird in the air. I saw with the eyes of my mind such glory as cannot be expressed. I saw the eternal Sun of Righteousness shining more glorious than the sun in his meridian lustre. Indeed, I had such views of God and glory as I never had before or since. My mother, on hearing that I was dead, ran to the bed, and raised me up in her arms. After some time I again began to breathe; but the impression it left will never be obliterated. It was much against my wish that I was again restored to life; for it was the longing desire of my soul to depart and to be with Christ, of which I had full assurance.

The first time I went abroad, after my recovery, I was impressed to serve in His Majesty's navy. I pleaded my youth and my present weakness. While I was speaking, an honest Quaker came by, and addressed himself to the mayor as follows:

QUAKER.—What art thou going to do with that lad?

MAYOR.—Send him to serve His Majesty.

Q.—There are others more fit for the service, yea, a hundred in this town: send them; send idle, disorderly persons, not honest men's sons who live by their diligence and frugality.

M.—The king must have men; if we cannot get seamen, we must take others.

Q.—Look upon that lad: thou mayest read innocence in his countenance.

M.—He will look much better after he has been six months at sea; and in time he will be a captain.

Q.—Let him go home; there are men enough to be got besides him.

After a few more words, the mayor told me to make haste home.

I admire the kindness of the Most High in this. Many of my neighbours were sent from their native land, and carried to the Havannah; but God put it into the mind of that good old Friend to speak for me, and thereby to procure me my liberty.

About this time the Lord opened the mouth of one of my brothers to speak in public. The first time I heard him he spoke from the words of good old Simeon: 'Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.' That night the farmer's house where he had preached took fire, and was burned; but the family were saved so as by fire.

When I was about twenty years of age, some Christian friends desired me to go to prayer; for as yet I had not prayed much in public. This was a cross to me; but when my mother urged me, I broke through. I have no doubt but the gracious Spirit helped my infirmities, and enabled me to ask those things that were agreeable to the will of God. I was encouraged to go on; and as we had family prayer for many years, I often assisted in the performance of that duty. Soon after I was desired to pray again in public, and after much importunity I consented.

The doctrine of Christian perfection was now

preached among us, and numbers professed they had attained the blessing. I had not the least doubt of the testimony of several, as their whole behaviour agreed with their profession. I believed the doctrine, and my soul longed to experience it. I prayed that every thought and desire might centre in God. While my eldest brother and I were pouring out our souls to God for this blessing, the Lord poured out His Spirit upon us; every heart present appeared like melting wax before the fire; and in that hour God gave my mother a testimony that He had cleansed her from all unrighteousness; which I trust she retains to this day.

My soul was now on full stretch after the blessing. I not only believed it attainable, but that I should attain it: therefore I constantly expected that Christ would come to cleanse and keep my heart. Accordingly, one Saturday night, I came to the class, and resolved not to depart till mine eyes had seen this great salvation. After I had entered the room, my heart seemed as hard as a stone; but I was not discouraged. All my prayer was, 'Lord, create in me a clean heart, and renew in me a right spirit.' The mighty power of God descended upon me; my heart was emptied of every evil, and Jesus took up all the room. I could no longer refrain from telling what God had done for my soul. My heart was filled with love and joy, and my lips praised Him.

For three weeks I enjoyed constant fellowship with God; there was not a cloud on my mind;

I walked in the light, and often scarce felt the ground on which I trod. I never expected to feel a wandering thought more. But at the end of three weeks I felt my thoughts wander, and then inferred I had lost the blessing; and had hard work to retain what I had received even in justification.

Not long after this, I was greatly harassed with blasphemous thoughts; but my soul abhorred them. The devil, likewise, tempted me to destroy myself. One day, when I had a razor in my hand, he told me that was a fit instrument for the purpose: he likewise added, if I did, I should be happy for ever. But something within answered, 'No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.' My struggle was so great I thought the blood would have started through my nose, eyes, and ears. At length I threw the razor on the ground, and fell on my knees. God soon heard me, and rebuked the destroyer.

All the time I had these sore conflicts, God secretly called on me to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come; but in this I was disobedient. The language of my heart was, 'Send by whom Thou wilt, but send not me.' It was about this part of my life the hand of the Lord was more visible in preserving me than in any other. I shall mention two or three instances.

One day I was standing in a tin-pit, about eight yards from the top, and four from the bottom; the men above were drawing up a piece of timber, the end of which pulled a stone out of the brink of the pit. The men above cried out, on which I

leaned my head a little forward, and the stone fell between my shoulders. In that instant I fell backwards, and dropped down four yards below me. And as I fell among some small stones, my back and neck were hurt ; but, blessed be God, I had no bones broken, nor any other damage but what I recovered in two or three days. Those who saw me fall expected my brains were dashed out. But the kind hand of God lengthened the thread of life. Oh how great is His goodness !

Some time after, I had another proof of God's mercy and goodness. I was one day standing on what we call in Cornwall ' a borough of attle,' which filled an old tin-pit, and stood a considerable height from the surface of the earth. While I was standing on its top, it sunk in an instant under my feet ;. and I literally went down quick into the pit. The attle immediately followed me, and covered my head ; but I went down till I came where a miner was working, who was greatly surprised to see me. If I had been retarded in my passage, I must have been inevitably suffocated. Glory be to God, I received no damage !

But the greatest deliverance happened soon after this. One day, as I was working in the bottom of a pit, about ten yards deep, I laid aside my tool, and fell on my knees, and found uncommon enlargement in prayer. In less than two minutes the ground fell in. A very large stone fell before me, which rose higher than my head. Two others fell, one on my right side, and the other on my left ; these, likewise, rose

above my head. A fourth fell like a cover, and rested on the top of the others, about four inches above my head. Some scores of small ones fell behind on my legs and feet; while others fell on the cover that was over me. Here I was shut up as in a prison. When my father came to the brink of the pit, and found me buried, he fell a-weeping. But when he found I was alive, he told me the whole pit would fill to the top. I desired him to go out of the reach of danger. I was a little surprised at first; but it was soon gone. As the stones were large and hollow, I had sufficient room to breathe. When he perceived that no more stones fell, he got help, and by degrees removed some of the large stones; and, after cutting my shoes from my feet, I was got out without receiving the least injury. I cannot help admiring the providence of God in the following particulars:

1. I was praying at the time this happened.

2. I was kneeling. Had I been standing, I should have been crushed to pieces; had I been sitting, my legs would have been broken with the large stone which fell before me.

3. They fell in an instant. Had I heard them coming, probably I should have risen from my knees; and then the stone which fell like a cover would have dashed out my brains.

4. Three large stones fell, one before me, and one on each side; and only small ones behind on my legs. Had a large one fallen there, my legs would have been broken into shivers.

5. The three large ones that fell were a few

inches higher than my head, and were instantly covered with another large one. Had they been a few inches lower, the last would certainly have killed me in a moment. Surely this preservation was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes!

One Lord's day we expected a travelling preacher. The people were gathered together from various parts, when word was brought that he could not come. On hearing this, I was desired to stand up, and speak to the people. The conflict in my breast was very strong; and if my friends had observed my countenance, they could not help seeing it. But I refused to open my mouth. Presently a horrid gloom overwhelmed me. I knew not where to go, or what to do. I feared God would send me down quick into the pit. I came home greatly distressed; and while walking in the fields, filled with confusion and horror, I feebly said, 'Lord, if it be Thy will that such a worm should speak Thy word, chasten my body, but save my soul.' I was instantly seized in every part. My head was sick, and my heart faint. My feet and legs were so enfeebled, they could scarce support my body; I fell on the ground, and laid my mouth in the dust, while the hand of the Almighty pressed me sore. After a time, I faintly said, 'Lord, if Thou wilt restore me, my mouth shall show forth Thy praise; I will this night begin in the family.' In an instant the distress was removed, both from my body and mind, and I was filled with peace and love.

When I returned to the house, the enemy told me to put off speaking a day or two longer. But I attended to the counsel of the wise man: 'When thou vowest a vow unto the Lord, take care and perform it.' Accordingly, I exhorted that night, for the first time, which was in my father's house. Soon after I was desired to exhort in the society; and then, by their advice, I did it in public.

The first time I attempted to preach, I was exceedingly anxious about dividing the word in a proper manner. And as I was a mile from the preaching-house, I walked a by-road, that no one might disturb my thoughts, or turn off my mind from the subject. As I went along, I began to preach to myself, and continued so to do until I came near the preaching-house. But how was I disappointed, when I took the same words before the congregation! Alas! all my fine skeleton vanished from my sight, and I was filled with shame and confusion.

I believe this would have cured me of taking another text if my Christian friends had not pressed me to a second trial; and as I did not lean to my own understanding, God was pleased out of the mouth of the weak to ordain strength.

Other societies now invited me to preach to them. When I went, God was with me of a truth; several were convinced of sin, and some found peace.

In the parish of Morva, three or four have fallen to the ground under a sermon, and groaned to God for mercy. Many who had backslidden

returned unto God, who healed their backslidings, and loved them freely. The travelling preachers, who had forsaken them, again visited them; and some who were then restored are now in Abraham's bosom.

Mr. Rankin, who was the assistant, at the Quarterly Meeting desired me to inform the company why I desired to preach. I rose trembling, and with many tears said, 'When you came first into the round, I gave you an account of my conversion, and my call to this work. Since that, I have spoken at several places, and here are some present who have heard me. They are at liberty to speak what they think.' On this, two or three grave men arose, and represented me in a very favourable light. Mr. Rankin admitted they were proper judges, and told me I should preach and exhort on Sundays, so as to return the same night. From this time I frequently, on the Sabbath, travelled many miles on foot, preached three times, and returned home about ten at night. Many times in my going out and returning home I have prostrated myself on the ground, and lifted up my heart to God for His blessing on my endeavours, and often found Him benignly near. Glory be to His name for ever!

One of my brothers, who was labouring in the vineyard, often refreshed my soul by his letters: but when he wrote of settling, it filled me with grief; for I thought, after setting his hand to the plough, he ought never to look back. But some difference that happened between him and a

troublesome man in the town of Pembroke caused him to decline the itinerant life. He came to Cornwall, and in a little time we both sailed for Wales. Here I tarried four or five weeks, and preached in various parts; and I hope all I said was not in vain.

I returned, and continued working at my business a full year; and then with my youngest brother I went to Wales again. On the 10th of July, 1768, I was married to E—— S——. My mind was very serious at that time, from which my mother-in-law concluded I was in a decline; but having obtained help from God, I continue to this day. I returned to Cornwall with my wife about the beginning of August. We received the travelling preachers near twelve months. Business again called me into Wales: here, sir, I met with you. And as you wanted a preacher for Glamorganshire Circuit, I freely offered my service, which you accepted. I then bought a horse, &c., out of my own money, and made all the haste I could into my round.

Here I found great favour in the eyes of the people, and was in more danger from their smiles than their frowns. The preacher that was with me was also exceedingly kind; so that my time glided on smoothly. In April I returned to Cornwall, and brought my wife back with me into Wales.

When Mr. Dempster left me in the circuit, while he went to the Conference, I preached at two new places, lying between Pembroke Ferry and Haverfordwest. At the last of these places a little

society was formed; and I hope a few of them continue to this day.

The next year I spent partly in Pembrokeshire, and partly in Brecknockshire and Radnorshire. In this round I attempted to enlarge our borders. In the strength of the Lord, I went to Bishop's Castle, a town wicked to a proverb. I had nobody with me; but the Lord was with me of a truth. I put my horse up at an inn, and wrote a lesson for the crier. I gave him this and the money at the same time: after reading the notice, he began to make some scruples. I told him he had taken my money, and therefore I insisted that he would do his duty. Accordingly, he published me to preach under the town hall, the most public and convenient place in the town. At the time appointed, hundreds flocked to hear. I stood on the steps, and preached from Amos v. 6. I bless God, He did not let me want matter, manner, or liberty! Some threw their hats in my face; but that did not hinder me from proceeding. The tears trickled down many faces; and after I had done, five or six came round me, and begged I would come again. I believe the power of the Highest reached many hearts; and had my successors followed the blow, the kingdom of Satan might have been shaken in that wicked town.

The next day I rode thirty or forty miles to Tenbury in Worcestershire. The first time I came to this place, Mr. G—— was there, intending to preach in the house of Miss H——, who had removed thither with an intent to keep a boarding-school. Before he began he informed the

congregation that if any of them misbehaved he should take the liberty to stop his preaching, and put them out of doors. In a short time some of them began to make a great noise: accordingly, he came down to fulfil his promise, laid hold on one of them, and was putting him out, when twenty more surrounded him; and if the good women of the house had not interposed, I know not what the consequence would have been. However, we soon got all the mob out of doors, and then ended our meeting in peace.

The second time I came, the people cried out I was come to preach against the Church. I know not when I have attempted to preach in greater confusion. They brought gunpowder with them, and almost filled the place with the smoke of it. It happened a very rough man, who had come out of the country, came that night to hear preaching. He sat near me, and had a large bludgeon in his hand. As soon as he heard the explosion of the gunpowder, he rose from his seat, and with his mouth full of oaths said he would knock the brains of the persons out who had made the disturbance. I begged of him, if he was my friend, to lay aside that weapon: after some time he seemed more pacified.

Before I came the second time, a great part of the church fell down; but as it happened on a week-day, no person was hurt. I think it was the Sunday after that the minister, whose name was David, stood on a part of the ruins, and took for his text, 'Lord, remember David, and all his troubles' (Ps. cxxxii. 1). He spoke of the tender

care and sparing mercy of God, in not permitting the church to fall when the people were in it. The tenderness of his own heart appeared by the tears flowing plentifully down his cheeks. But while he wept, the hardened congregation laughed. The reason some assigned for their behaviour was, 'The p[arson] had made too free with the bottle.'

When I came the third time, I was resolved to preach abroad; and, that all the town might have notice, I sent for the crier, who was unwilling to publish it until I gave him a double fee. About half an hour before the time, a mob assembled before the house where I was: they saw me through the window, and cried out, 'There he is.' I went to the window, threw up the sash, and said, 'I am here, and will be with you soon.' When the time came, I went out in the strength of the Lord. Some of them pelted me with dirt and broken tiles; but they neither hurt me nor hindered me. Before I ended my sermon, some of the mob got a piece of wood dressed like a man. They put an old wig on its head, and danced it up and down before me; but I looked up to God, and was preserved from levity. The mob, from this time, became more civilized: but I have not heard whether there was any Methodist preaching in the town since I left it.

The next day I rode to the city of Hereford. The house we used to preach in being very small, and in an obscure part of the city, I resolved to preach out of doors here also. To that end I walked through the city to find the most convenient place; and when the hour came, I stood

with my back against St. Nicholas's Church. While I sung a hymn, numbers flocked together, among whom were several gentlemen, and two or three clergymen. I was soon accosted by a baker, who said I was come to preach against the Church. He was very passionate; but the Lord endued me with patience. I went on, and he soon went away.

After this, some made an attempt to throw a pail of milk on me; but others prevented them. However, before I had done, a wicked man, whose nickname was Bacon, gathered dirt out of the kennel, and threw it in my face and eyes. It so besmeared me that I could proceed no farther. I then walked to the house of a justice of the peace, a man of unblemished character. He came to the door, and desired me to walk in, and said he was sorry for the ill-usage I had received; and added, 'This is a very wicked place,' &c. I said, 'You see, sir, I have been ill-used, and therefore I hope you will do me justice.' He said, 'Why did you not apply to the mayor?' I answered I had no objection against applying to him; but I inquired for the nearest justice. He said, 'The city is divided into wards, and each magistrate has his ward.' I answered, 'I presume, as His Majesty's commissioner of the peace, you are empowered to restore and keep the peace throughout the city.' He said, 'That is true. I am no enemy to religious people of whatever denomination.'

I said, 'The Methodists are a people in being near forty years: they are loyal subjects; they

are inoffensive, and desire to live peaceably with all men.' He then asked, 'By what law do you expect satisfaction?' I answered, 'By a law made in the first year of the reign of William and Mary, called the Toleration Act.' He asked, 'Have you taken the oaths?' I said, 'Yes'; and showed him my certificate. He read it, and said, 'If you insist on it, I will send the man that disturbed you to jail; but if I do, as he has a wife and several children, these must come on the town. Therefore, if you will show him lenity this time, I will take care of him in future.' I answered, 'I shall submit to your judgement in the affair. I insist on no damage for what is past: I only desire that in future I may preach the gospel in peace.' He said he was glad to find I was of a pacific disposition; that he would have the man before him the next morning, and threaten him; and that if ever he disturbed me again, he would send him to jail forthwith. I then returned him thanks, and departed; and believe he kept his word, seeing that man never hindered me after.

I spent the next year in Cornwall with great satisfaction, and the Lord visited many with His great salvation. On Easter Day, in the morning, I preached at Mevagissey. The power of God was present, both to wound and to heal. The cries and prayers of some, and the praise of others, constrained me two or three times to break off preaching, and join with them in prayer and praise. Though I am no advocate for noisy assemblies, yet I think there are times when

people cannot help roaring for the disquietude of their souls; and others, when they cannot refrain from praising God aloud for all the great things He hath done for them.

From thence I went to St. Mawes, and preached at noon. The Word of God was like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces! From thence I rode to Tregony, and preached in the street. Here likewise the gracious Spirit wrought upon many hearts. At the close of the year we had just a hundred more in the society in that circuit than was in it when we came, many of whom had found peace with God.

The next year I travelled in the west of Cornwall. Here we saw but little fruit; but my soul was often like a watered garden. One Sabbath day I went, with several others, from Plymouth Dock to St. Germains. An old Quaker gave me leave to speak before his door. The congregation was large, and in general very attentive. I believe the Lord spoke to many hearts. After preaching, the Quaker took us to his house, and gave me a little refreshment. After I received it, I sat some time in meditation, as my soul was in a happy frame; afterwards I fell on my knees, and poured out my soul in prayer. All who were present fell on their knees also. The power of God descended, so that scarcely any refrained from sighs, groans, and tears. From this I inferred that Friends can feel as well as others, when the Lord touches the heart.

The year after I went to Wales; but, alas! the Antinomians had sown their tares so thick

that there was little or no room for the wheat to spring up.

The two following years I spent in the east of Cornwall, with much satisfaction. Before I came, a good work was begun at Plymouth Dock, when Mr. Thomas Olivers was there. Before he came, the Antinomians seemed to carry all before them. Mr. Olivers preached several controversial sermons, in which he laid the axe at the root of Calvinism and Antinomianism. His arguments were powerful, and well supported by the Word of God. Many now began to awake out of sleep; and these glorious beginnings were a means of adding near a hundred to that society. Before he came, they were a little more than thirty; and when I carried the account to our yearly Conference, they were a hundred and thirty.

While in this round, I again visited St. Germains; but met with a very rough reception. The mob gathered round the door, pelted me with rotten eggs; and after we shut the door, they cursed and swore, and broke the bottom part of it in pieces. God enabled me to possess my soul in patience; my mind was stayed on Him, and I was kept in perfect peace.

I likewise preached at Millbrook. Here also they pelted me with eggs; one of which would have taken me full in the mouth, but a young man that stood before me instantly put up his hand and caught it. Blessed be the Lord, He was on my side; and I had no fear what men or devils could do unto me.

When I came to Bodmin, the people told me

two or three young men had several times disturbed the congregation. I told them, if they disturbed me, I would endeavour to make them quiet. In the evening one of them came, and began to make a noise. I desired him to be quiet; but he would not. I stopped in preaching, came from the pulpit, and put him out of the room. I had no sooner resumed my discourse than he came in, and behaved more disorderly than before. I told the people I could not proceed, and desired they would take notice of it. Next day we got a warrant, and brought the offender before the mayor, who talked to him in a manner becoming his office. He told him he might as well go to church and make a noise there; that the law was on our side, &c. The young man trembled and cried, and offered to kneel and ask pardon; but I suffered him not. He paid the expense of the warrant and constable, and we had quietness all the time I was in that circuit.

Since that I have met with many heavy trials from a quarter I least expected; but think it most prudent to pass them over in silence. God knows them all, and the Judge of all the earth will do right.

On the 29th of last June I preached on Wood Green, at the end of Witney, in Oxfordshire. While I was preaching, something uncommon impelled me to say, 'My dear friends, take notice of what I am going to say. Before this day month, you will hear and see something very uncommon'; but I knew not why I said so. On Wednesday, 2nd of July, it began to thunder and

lighten in a very dreadful manner. The people cried out that I had prophesied the world was to be at an end in a month; and they thought it was now fulfilling: two persons were struck dead by the lightning. Numbers had their sins set in order before them, saw the necessity of a Saviour, and some groaned after Him.

On the 10th the Lord thundered from heaven, and sent forth His lightnings, a second time. On the 11th it was more dreadful than it had been before. Now, indeed, the most stubborn heart trembled, and bowed before the Lord. The numbers that flocked both to the church and meeting were incredible; and there was such an awakening among them as the oldest man living could not remember. In consequence thereof, the next time I came there I added fifty new members to our society.

Thus, sir, I have given you a short account of the mercy of God to my soul and body; and also of that little which I have done and suffered for His name's sake. Before I conclude, it may not be amiss to give some account of my sentiments. And

(1) I believe God made the first man holy, harmless, and undefiled; but being in honour, he continued not; he yielded to the tempter, and this stripped him of the moral image of God. I believe, also, that all sinned and fell in him.

(2) I believe all mankind were in Adam when God gave him the promise of a Saviour; and that consequently the promise was not only to him, but to his children.

(3) I believe, with the Church of England, that Christ made, on the cross, a perfect and sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation for all the sins of the whole world, whether original or actual. And that by virtue of this, all men may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth: that God rejects none but such as do despite to the Spirit of grace.

(4) I believe that, in order to be saved from the guilt and power of sin, men must repent, and believe in Christ.

(5) I believe repentance to consist in a consciousness of sin, a godly sorrow for it, and a turning from it to God. I also believe faith to be the gift of God, but the act of man. God gives the power, and man uses it.

(6) I believe that, in order to final salvation, our faith must be productive of good works; that without universal, personal holiness, no man shall see the Lord. This is so fully asserted in the Word of God that I am persuaded all the craft of men, and all the rage of devils, cannot overthrow it.

(7) I believe the crown of all spiritual blessings is the gift of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ.

These, sir, are the doctrines I believe and teach; and at present I have no desire to change. I have had several offers from the world; but I love it not. I have had the offer of two or three Dissenting congregations. They have my thanks for their intended kindness. But it is my desire to live and die a Methodist preacher. The height of my ambition is to labour among my fathers

and brethren, until we lie down together in the dust, and mount up into our Master's joy.

I am, Rev. and dear sir,
Your son in the gospel,
RICHARD RODDA.

The *Methodist Magazine*, December, 1815, says:

When unable, through age and infirmities, to undergo the labours of an itinerant minister, Mr. Rodda settled in the metropolis, where, to the utmost of his power, he laboured in the word and doctrine. On the Tuesday before his death he met his class; and on the Friday following attended the weekly meeting of the preachers at the City Road chapel. He had long been afflicted with a severe asthmatic complaint; but no apprehension was entertained of his speedy removal from earth to heaven till he was on the verge of eternity.

Mr. Rance, the surgeon who attended Mr. Rodda, favoured us with the following account of the origin, progress, and fatal effects of his complaint:

'The origin of his disease I should consider to have arisen from repeated exposure to damp and cold, probably from sleeping in damp beds. During the cold and damp season the fits of his disease were frequent; so that during the whole of the winter, for a few years past, he was confined to the house. On the return of the dry and warm weather he was able occasionally to engage in the work of the ministry. His constitution was naturally robust; and from his strength of body and muscular fibres, had he not laboured under

a local affection of the chest, he might, humanly speaking, have lived many years.

'On Thursday, October 26, and the following day, he felt some return of his difficulty of breathing. This he attributed to the cold and humid state of the atmosphere; and on Saturday evening the paroxysm increased in violence. On Sunday morning, finding that his difficulty of breathing had considerably increased, he sent a message to me, requesting my immediate attendance. I found him in a state of suffocation, occasioned by a violent fit of asthma. As symptoms indicative of inflammatory action were present, I took a portion of blood from him, and administered some medicine, from which he at first found some slight relief. But in a short time the fit resumed its violence, and the breathing became quick and more laborious. I now considered that all human efforts and medical skill would prove unavailing; and in this respect my expectations were painfully realized: for his respiration became quicker and shorter until two o'clock on Monday morning, when he expired.

'From my knowledge of Mr. Rodda, I considered him a man of uprightness and independence of character, possessing great natural fortitude of mind, enjoying strong confidence in God, and always manifesting the greatest patience under affliction.'

Mr. Buckley, being sent for by Mrs. Rodda, about half-past nine o'clock on Sabbath day morning, October 29, found Mr. Rodda heavily afflicted with very great oppression upon his chest, and extreme difficulty of breathing. He was

praying most fervently for a sanctified use of his affliction, for resignation to the will of his Father, and particularly for a renewed baptism of the Holy Spirit. His language was, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Fill me with Thy precious love. Perfect the great work of holiness, and receive me to Thyself.' On seeing Mr. Buckley, he said, 'Oh I am glad to see you. I suffer much; but God is with me. It is now about fifty-eight years since the Lord set my soul at glorious liberty; and I have found Him to be a gracious God all the way; faithful to His promise. Not one word hath failed. Glory be to His name! Come, pray; but do not pray for my restoration, or for life. For why should I live when my work is done? Let me enter into the joy of my Lord.' During prayer he was very fervent in spirit; he appeared abundantly refreshed; death was swallowed up in victory; and his soul was on the wing for immortality. On taking an affectionate leave of his friend, he commended him to God; and again he expressed his unshaken confidence that he should, through the blood of his gracious Redeemer, enjoy, and for ever enjoy, the purchased and heavenly inheritance; and said, 'All is well. The Lord bless you.'

Mr. James Mackie, of Banner Street, writes:

'On Sunday afternoon, when I entered the room, he said, "Do not pray for my stay. I long to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Lord Jesus, give me patience." In expressing his love for the Lord Jesus, he said, "I could go to Smithfield, and die for His dear cause. I know

I could." Some little time after, he prayed most fervently for the spread of the gospel; that the Lord would own the labours of His ministers; and especially that the young preachers might declare the word with zeal and faithfulness; that they might be kept humble, and that their doctrine might be pure. He frequently prayed, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." '

Thus died another of our old, pious, and faithful preachers, after having long borne the burden and heat of the day. His life of piety, zeal, and usefulness was crowned with a triumphant end.

This obituary appears in the *Minutes* of 1816:

Richard Rodda; a man of sound judgement, of strict morals, of considerable talents, and abundant in the work of the ministry. He sought the Lord when about thirteen years of age, followed Him fully, and was rendered a blessing to many souls; not only in his public labours as a preacher of the gospel, but by his judicious counsels, his Christian sympathy, and tender concern for those societies he was called to watch over. Thirty-three years he endured the toils of an itinerant life; and when he could no longer bear them, he laboured in London, in proportion to his strength, from 1802 till his death, October 30, 1815. His prayer in his last illness, that the struggle might be short, was graciously answered; and, what was of infinitely greater value, he had great peace and joy in the God of his salvation.

THOMAS HANSON

CROWAN, *March* 11, 1780.[1]

IT is very difficult to write where self is concerned. But as I am requested, I shall endeavour to give a brief account of those circumstances in my life which particularly discover the divine pity towards me.

I was born of honest parents, in Horbury, near Wakefield, in the county of York, I think in May, 1733, the youngest of two sons at a birth; my parents having had six sons and two daughters. He that was born with me died in his childhood. My father died when I was near eleven years old. Six out of the seven of us that lived have found mercy and forgiveness through Christ. My truly pious mother had the happiness to see it before she died, though she has been dead above twenty years. Two of my elder brothers fell into sin, and turned back; but one is restored, I hope, to favour and to heaven: the other is not yet recovered; but oh may he be soon!

We always lived in love and harmony. I never had, to my knowledge, twenty angry words with either brother or sister in my life. I do not remember to have heard an oath in all the family. About thirty-four years ago my mother and three

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1780, p. 477.

elder brothers were brought to God. I was then convinced and a little awakened by hearing Mr. Francis Scott[1]: the very man, I think, by whom my ever-dear mother had been awakened and brought to God. From that time my good desires did not quite leave me. I hope my mother's prayers, tears, and advice will never leave my mind and heart. I was a thoughtless, careless, Christless son before that time, and had no fear of God before my eyes.

I was placed, at about thirteen years of age, in the profession which my father and brothers had followed; namely, a clothier. I now often went to hear the Methodist preachers, though we had some miles to go. Many of those that are now, I doubt not, singing in heaven used to go and come with me in the evenings through the woods; often singing those sweet words—

> Break forth into singing, ye trees of the wood;
> For Jesus is bringing lost sinners to God.

I used to pray inwardly in my way to the preaching; yea, and often turned aside to pray. I was afraid to be seen or known to pray alone: so I sought out every private place that I could.

We had much persecution then, and a great deal of talk about false prophets in sheep's clothing. But the most common name for them was 'the damnation preachers,' which I thought was far from sheep's clothing: so that did not hinder me much. But I was greatly troubled with horrid suggestions, and had many fears, no doubt from

[1] A local preacher, part of whose joiner's shop was used as a preaching-room. See Wesley's *Journal*, August 20, 1748.

the wicked one, in private prayer ; that I was for quite laying it aside. I was afraid to go to it ; and yet I durst not give it over. I was in a strait on another account—I was ashamed of the gospel : I did not stand firm on God's side ; and yet I durst not be on the devil's side. I was very fearful of being deceived, reasoning and doubting for several years whether the knowledge of pardon was attainable here. I thought God did forgive men their sin ; but that none could know it for himself. But afterwards I was clearly convinced by hearing my brother's experience, and weighing the scriptures that he urged for it. And I had then a comfortable hope of one day finding it ; but for some years I was between hope and fear. When I was about nineteen years old, in 1752, by my eldest brother's advice, I went to Mr. Byrries, at the Deighn-house, near Netherthong. Here I stayed for near four years. Divine Providence certainly cast me here, where I had all the advantages I could wish for, having two schoolmasters near at hand. I wrought seven or eight hours a day, with my book before me, and spent the rest of the day and part of the night in learning. This I did during the whole time I was here. Mr. Hinslif taught me to write and cast accounts for above a year ; and Mr. Wood, of Netherthong, the Latin master, taught me a little Latin and Greek. I got what I could by heart in the day, and said it to him at night. But as soon as I left this place, I laid these studies aside, and re-assumed them no more to this day. I have since had other work,

and could not see any absolute need of these in the particular service to which I was providentially called.

We had no Methodist preachers here. I did not hear ten sermons, except at church, for nearly four years. Here I was greatly beloved by those that had any seriousness, and greatly hated by those that had none; for I could not hold my tongue about religion: my conscience would not let me be quiet many a time. I told them we must get our sins forgiven, or perish for ever. And frequently I wept with some of them about it. Several thereabouts came to me for advice concerning their souls; though I, poor creature, was ignorant enough, and wellnigh lost in my book.

My conscience during these years often alarmed me. But now it would give me no rest for want of Christ and pardon. So I determined, notwithstanding many offered me favours in worldly things, to go home to my mother and brothers. Several wept, and entreated me to stay. I told them, 'I cannot save my soul here: I have not the means suitable for it.'

Home I came, in 1756, with a full resolution to seek Christ till I found Him, or die in the seeking of Him. Then I sold or gave away nearly all my books, and through grace began to be as diligent in the ways of God as I had been in study.

I now added fasting to all the other means of grace. Soon after this the tempter told me, 'Thou art good enough.' But a sermon of honest brother Ash, on Gal. ii. 21, and the words of my dear mother, who said, 'Though I bore you, if

you do not come to Christ stripped of all, you will never be saved,' tore away my self-righteousness. God now taught me to expect Christ and pardon every hour. My burden was too great to be expressed, when God had, by various means (particularly by reading the Bible, and the extract of Ambrose on the New Birth, on my knees), brought me, for three weeks, to the brink of despair. Just before I found pardon I was miserable beyond description.

On July 16, 1757, at night, under my brother Joseph's prayer, I yielded, sunk, and, as it were, died away. My heart, with a kind, sweet struggle, melted into the hands of God. I was for some hours lost in wonder, by the astonishing peace, love, and joy which flowed into my heart like a mighty torrent. When I came to recollect myself, I asked, 'What hast Thou done?' It was sweetly but deeply impressed, 'I have made thee Mine.' No tongue can tell what peace, love, joy, and assurance I then felt. My willing heart and tongue replied, 'Hast Thou thus loved me? Here I am, willing to spend and be spent for Thee.' God now gave me to see all creation, redemption, grace, and glory in a new light; and everything led me to love and praise Him.

From this night I could not hold my tongue from speaking of the things of God. A few days after my happy conversion, I felt anger at one who persecuted us. Soon after my peace left me. Then the tempter said, 'He that is born of God sinneth not. But thou hast sinned: therefore thou art not born of God. Thou hast deceived

thyself.' I was then in a great measure ignorant of his devices; so gave up my shield, and was in the depth of distress, ready to choose strangling, for nearly two hours. It then came to my mind, 'What if I had deceived myself? pardon is free, and given in an instant. It is ready for needy, lost sinners: I will go as I am, cast myself on the ground, and on Christ at once.' My former peace, love, and joy returned in a moment. This sore trial taught me more watchfulness. After this I walked in great love and peace for nearly two years, buying up every opportunity for prayer, hearing, and reading. I read the chief part of the *Christian Library*, with Mr. Wesley's *Works* that were then published, and several other books, to my great help, instruction, and comfort.

Now the same spirit that witnessed my adoption cried in me, night and day, 'Spend and be spent for God!' Yet never was any one more timorous: I thought the work so great, and my abilities so small. I cried, 'I am not fit'; I wept, and kept it to myself for months. Oh what a struggle had I between my unfitness and my love to God and souls! After this, the Ossett people, by earnest entreaties, prevailed on me to pray in public. And it pleased God to make this the means of awakening some sinners. Then I was persuaded to exhort. God blessed this also to the conversion of several in the neighbouring towns. Now began my warfare with the various sects about us, who came, when I had preached at Ossett, to dispute with me often till midnight. But I was

soon heartily weary of dispute; for it caused a decay in my peace and love.

My inbred corruptions now began to perplex me more than ever, and to be a heavy load indeed for some time. But one day meeting with a few young men, as I often did, God gave me such a deliverance and such a weight of love as I had not heretofore. I seemed too happy to live on earth, and thought God was going to take me home. My joy allowed me little sleep for weeks. I told it to none but my brother; and to him only when I could keep it no longer from him.

Not long after this, a letter came from Mr. Thomas Olivers (who afterwards behaved with the tenderness and wisdom of a father to me), to let me know that I was appointed by the Conference to travel in the then York Circuit. This was done wholly without my knowledge. No one had spoken to me about it, nor I to any one. I already preached four or five times a week about home, and loved the people too well to desire to leave them. In my answer to Mr. Olivers, I said, 'I have no doubt of my call to preach; but have no desire to be a travelling preacher. I am not fit for it. I cannot come.' He replied, 'If your father was dead, and your mother lay a-dying, you must come and preach the gospel.' I wept a fortnight about it. I said to my brother, 'Go you: you are more fit than I am.' He said, 'God knows who is fit. He has called you: therefore go.' The gracious Spirit working in me a willingness to spend and be spent for God, and my brother persuading me, I went in 1760,

and through grace have continued unto this day. In all this time, I call the all-seeing God and His people to bear witness that I have sought nothing but His glory in my own salvation and that of others.

I have been in most of the circuits in the kingdom. And I trust God has been pleased to use me, and those with me, during these twenty years, to unite thousands to the societies. But it is better to leave this to God and His people. They are our epistle, written by Christ to the rejoicing of our hearts. May their conversion be known and read by all that know them !

I have been in dangers by snow-drifts, by land-floods, by falls from my horse, and by persecution : I have been in sickness, cold, pain, weakness, and weariness often ; in joyful comforts often ; in daily love and peace, but not enough ; in grief and heaviness through manifold temptations often. I have had abundance of trials, with my heart, with my understanding and judgement, with various reasonings among friends and foes, with men and devils, and most with myself. But in all these, God in mercy has hitherto so kept me that I believe none can with justice lay any single immoral act to my charge, since the day when God through Christ forgave my sins.

All my design in preaching has been, and is, to bring sinners to Christ ; and to build up saints in their most holy faith, hope, and love, to a perfect man.

To this end the chief matter of my preaching has been the essentials of religion ; such as, the

lost state of man, depraved, guilty, and miserable by nature; his justification through the alone merit of Christ by faith only, together with the witness and fruits of it; the new birth, the necessity, benefits, and fruits of it, in all inward and outward holiness. I have endeavoured to explain the new covenant in its benefits, condition, precepts, threats, and rewards. I have shown that perfect love is attainable here, by those that press for it with their whole heart. I teach piety to God, justice and mercy to men, and sobriety in ourselves, endeavouring to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man, in every station of life and in all relations. I also endeavour to guard souls against the temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil; against the hurtful opinions that surround them; and against the hindrances of their repentance, faith, hope, love, and holiness. I have also shown them the danger of delay, of refusal, or of drawing back to sin, death, and hell.

In the pulpit I have seldom meddled with the decrees, or the five points of debate. I suffered so much loss by them before I set out to travel that I determined not to meddle with them, but when my brethren were in danger of being led aside or hurt by them. So far as I see clear evidence for any of these things, I hold and prove them as occasion offers. But where I see no sufficient proof of a proposition, I leave the discussion of them to those that are wiser. But yet I cannot help thinking that many of these disputes are not much more than a learned play: and if wise men would but

play with these in good humour, it would not much grieve one. But when they grow angry, and call each other by vile names, because they differ from them herein, no doubt the devil has a great hand in it. He aims to undo, by the non-essentials in religion, the good that is done by insisting on the essentials. This has often been a cause of fear and grief to me. But having resolved to take Christ for my sufficient Teacher, I am now contented to know what He has revealed, and to leave the rest to another world. I have from my beginning thought myself the poor man's preacher; having nothing of politeness in my language, address, or anything else. I am but a brown bread preacher, that seeks to help all I can to heaven, in the best manner I can. Oh that in the day of Christ's judgement I may rejoice, not only in the sincerity of my labour, but in knowing that I have not preached, and laboured, and suffered without fruit, but have been the instrument of gaining souls to, and of keeping them with, Christ! And oh that He may present them to the Father, without blame, in perfect love. This is the real desire of

THOMAS HANSON.

This is his obituary in the *Minutes*:

THOMAS HANSON departed this life October 18, 1804, in the seventy-second year of his age, and forty-fifth of his ministry. He spent about twenty-two years in the vineyard of the Lord as an itinerant preacher; and when able to bear

the fatigues of itinerancy no longer, he retired to Horbury, near Wakefield, the place of his nativity, where he spent the last twenty years of his life, copying the example of his Lord and Master, 'who went about doing good.' He was a plain, honest, faithful, zealous man. His death was a comment on the words of the Psalmist: 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.'

ROBERT ROBERTS

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.[1]

BOLTON, *July 7*, 1779.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

When you were at Liverpool in the spring, you desired me to write an account of my life; but at that time I had little thought of doing it, as I could not see that it would answer any valuable end. Having, however, had time to consider the matter seriously, I now judge it may be of some use to those into whose hands it may fall, especially to those among whom I have preached the word of God. I have therefore ventured to send you a sketch of the most material things I can recollect respecting myself; and I pray God that it may be a means of promoting His glory, and the cause of religion in the world.

I was born in the year 1731, at Upton, near Chester. My parents were respectable farmers. My mother died when I was but eight years of age, and my father when I was sixteen, to my unspeakable loss. They were industrious, frugal, and prudent, and took more care of their children's morals and education than most parents do. While my father lived, I was employed in his business; but after his decease, I was put apprentice to a wheelwright in Chester.

[1] *Arminian Magazine*, 1800, p. 339.

As I was brought up a member of the Established Church, I attended the Church service, but understood neither the prayers, preaching, articles, nor homilies, being ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the power of God. I have reason to believe that the words of St. Paul were but too applicable to myself and the generality of those among whom I then lived: 'We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.'

I was in great bondage through fear of death from my infancy, and an entire stranger to the way of peace. I had no notion of salvation through a Redeemer, and knew no more of the nature and necessity of the new birth than Nicodemus did. Nor do I remember that I ever heard one gospel sermon till I was above twenty years of age; so that I have reason to add, I was at that time 'without Christ, being an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.' And yet I was kept from the commission of scandalous sins. I was sober by constitution, diligent in business, and very careful. And as I went to church oftener than many, I was deemed by myself, and those who knew me, better than others. But I was a great sinner before God, and a child of wrath; my heart was deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and my tempers, words, and actions were abominable in His sight with whom I have to do.

The first good impression, as far as I can recollect, that was made upon my mind was by a few words dropped by Mr. Thomas Brisco, without any seeming design of his: but God sent them home to my heart, and they were as a nail fixed in a sure place. We had been schoolfellows when very young; and when I went to live in Chester, we were intimate companions till he became religious. But then I avoided him, as though he had had the plague, because he was called a Methodist. Nevertheless, I retained a secret respect for him. About two years after his conversion, being in company with him and his brother, he happened to mention some rude usage they had met with that day as they returned from the church: among other things the people cried out, 'There go the sanctified Methodists!' He pitied their ignorance, and with a good deal of fervour wished that what they had said were true; adding, 'If I was sanctified, I should not be long out of heaven.' He talked about death as though he was not afraid of it, but rather as if it were a desirable event. This struck me indeed, and made a deep impression on my soul, and convinced me that there was something in religion which I was a stranger to.

From this time I entertained a good opinion of the Methodists, and believed them to be the servants of the living God. I began to pray, and strive against sin; I likewise resolved to join the society, but not yet. For I knew if I went among them, I must suffer persecution. At that time the Methodists were looked upon as the worst of

men, and the most horrible things were laid to their charge that could be invented. They were represented as hypocrites, blasphemers, disturbers of the peace of families and of the nation; and to associate with them was said to be the way to destroy body, soul, and substance. Others, indeed, might curse and swear, get drunk, profane the Sabbath, and starve their families, and yet be in no danger of persecution or ill-treatment of any kind; but, on the contrary, were deemed innocent creatures, in comparison of the Methodists, &c. I thought, 'I cannot bear this usage where I am known, and from my relations and neighbours; but, if I live to the expiration of my apprenticeship, I will go to London, or some other place where I am not known, and then I will be a Methodist.'

When I was about twenty-one years of age, Mr. Brisco invited me to hear Mr. John Hampson. I went with him, but was very much ashamed and afraid of being seen by any that knew me. However, I was well pleased with what the preacher said, and believed him to be a messenger from God. Notwithstanding this, I did not hear another preacher for near six months; for I feared persecution. Nevertheless, I retained my good opinion of the people, and the way in which they worshipped God; and now and then I spoke a word in their favour. My desires increased, I prayed frequently, and more fervently, but was overcome by sin, although I wished to be delivered from it, and made many resolutions against it. But, alas! I was without wisdom

and power, and too often was led captive by the enemy of souls. At length I took courage, and went to hear another preacher. The discourse was made useful to me, and likewise the conversation of some pious young men belonging to the society. I resolved, by divine grace, to serve God, and save my soul. My mind became in a measure enlightened, and I was enabled to forsake my sins and sinful companions all at once. The latter was no hard task; for most of them fled from me as soon as I was reported to be a Methodist; they were glad to get out of my way, lest I should reprove them, or cause them to be stigmatized with the same opprobrious name.

I now desired admission into the society; and after being examined by one of the preachers respecting the state of my mind, my motives, &c., I was favoured with that privilege; for such I then looked upon it to be, and I see it in the same point of light at this day. And I hope and believe I shall have reason to praise God to eternity that I ever was united with that despised people, whom God had greatly blessed; and I trust He will continue to bless them for ages to come.

I now constantly attended upon all the means of grace. I went to church, and received the sacrament almost every Lord's day. Divine light broke in upon my soul with so much clearness that I was astonished at myself, and was ready to say, 'Where have I been? and what have I been doing all my life till now?' I compared myself to a man who had lived all his life in a dungeon, and was brought suddenly out of it into the full

blaze of day. The Scriptures seemed new; as also the Common Prayer-Book and everything that was spiritual. And I was fully convinced that the doctrines taught by the Methodists, and those contained in the Word of God and the Common Prayers of the Church of England, must stand or fall together; there being no difference between them. I also saw that the Methodists had been greatly injured by slanders and evil reports; for instead of finding them to be hypocrites, disturbers of the peace of families, enthusiasts, &c., I found them sincere, peaceable, humble, and rational Christians; minding the things of this world in their place, and not neglecting those of another. For these reasons my soul was firmly united to them.

And now I met with what I expected; namely, persecution from relations, friends, and neighbours; and wherever I went, some railed, and others cursed me, and said 'it would be no more sin to kill me than to kill a mad dog.' Others pitied me, and cursed the false prophets, as they called the preachers, who had deceived me and driven me out of my senses. Into whatever street or lane in the city I went, I met with reproach and cruel mockings. This was a great trial to me; yet, by the grace of God, I bore it; though sometimes shame made it a sufficient exercise for all the patience, resolution, and grace I had. From my first setting out to be religious I never denied the truth; neither would I suffer its professors to be spoken against, without vindicating them to the utmost of my power. And

I thank God I always found somewhat to say that would either convince or stop the mouths of gainsayers; for I have always observed that the Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, and that the enemies of the truth cannot stand before it.

I had not been long among the Methodists before I was made sensible of my guilt, misery, and danger, and likewise of the absolute necessity of having an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ; that my sins might be forgiven, and that I might be born again; without which I knew I could not see the kingdom of God. I sought the Lord with earnestness day and night; and even wished it had been possible for me to live without sleep, that I might have spent all my time in this employment. Indeed, I did make a very little sleep serve, though I wrought hard every day. The consideration that I had wasted so much of my short life in a state of sin, ignorance, and rebellion against so good and merciful a God, greatly affected me, and I found it hard work to forgive the ministers I had sat under so long a time for not instructing me in the essential doctrines of the gospel; for I was persuaded that if I had heard the truths of the gospel laid down in a clear manner, I should have been brought to an acquaintance with the Lord some years before.

It was in the month of June, 1754, that I joined the society; and about six weeks after I experienced that peace which passeth all understanding. The love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and His Spirit did bear witness with my

spirit that I was His child. And now I blessed His holy name that ever I was born. I loved Him who had first loved me; and with joy declared His goodness to my fellow travellers, and we rejoiced together.

In a few weeks after I had found peace with God I began to see and feel the depravity of my nature in a greater degree than I ever had done before. At first I was dejected and cast down; then I began to doubt that I had deceived myself in concluding that the Lord was reconciled to me; and, my comfort decreasing, by and by I entirely cast away my confidence. And now a horrible dread overwhelmed my soul; and, to increase my distress, Satan threw his fiery darts at me, which stuck fast in my mind, particularly blasphemous thoughts. For some months such thoughts crowded into my mind as are not fit to be mentioned, and which could only proceed from the prince of darkness. The enemy then suggested that I had sinned against the Holy Ghost—that there was no mercy for me—and that these thoughts were not from him, but arose from my own heart. This affected me more than anything I had ever felt: to think that I should have such thoughts against that blessed God who had been so kind to me, and whom I desired to love and honour for ever, pierced me with inexpressible anguish.

In a short time I gave up all hope of mercy and deliverance, and sunk into utter despair. I imagined that I had blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, which threw me into such inexpressible

misery that I had no rest day or night, but in the morning I was ready to say, 'Would God it were evening!' and in the evening, 'Would God it were morning!' I fasted, prayed, and used every means of grace constantly, and resolved to serve God as long as I lived, if He did send me to hell when I died. I do not know that I gave way to one known sin, open or secret, when this distress came upon me, except that of unbelief. I conversed with the most experienced of the children of God I met with, but could find none who had drunk so deep of the wormwood and gall as I had done. However, they did all in their power to comfort me; they told me that God was with me, and would deliver me. I likewise read all the books I met with that were calculated to direct and help a soul in deep distress, but found few suited to my dreadful case. The books I received most benefit from were Bolton's *Instructions for the Right Comforting of Afflicted Consciences*; Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. At one time I was a little comforted with the following lines:

I never shall rise
To my first paradise,
Or come my Redeemer to see;
But I feel a faint hope
That at last He will stoop,
And His pity shall bring Him to me.

One day when I was at work, musing on my unhappy state, those precious words of Scripture were applied to my soul with some degree of

power: 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' This afforded me some consolation: but it was only like the morning cloud and early dew; it soon vanished away. I often thought that both God and the whole creation were against me; and concluded that I should have been happy had I been anything but a man; and was ready to say, 'Oh that I had never been born!' But one Saturday evening, at a prayer-meeting, the Lord blessed me with the powerful drawings of His love, and with a dawning of hope that He would yet be gracious to me. I was as a man raised from the dead; for I had been a long time in darkness, and would, I thought, have given as many worlds, had it been in my power, as there are minutes in eternity for the least dawning of hope. From this time till my great deliverance, I frequently found comfortable visits from on high.

My great distress continued about nine months; and the Lord was pleased to sanctify it to me. I was more abundantly sensible of the power of unbelief, and of my helplessness. I clearly saw I must be saved by grace, or not at all. I was stripped from all self-righteousness, and every other dependence but a crucified Saviour, and was made willing to be saved in God's own way as a sinner; yea, as the most unworthy of all creatures. I thought I was willing to wait till my last breath, if I were but sure the Lord would then smile upon me, and show me His salvation. The Lord then graciously manifested Himself unto me as my Lord and my God in a powerful manner. He overturned my unbelief and all my doubts and fears.

He removed all my misery, and filled me with peace and joy through believing; so that I was as a giant refreshed with new wine; my cup ran over, and I was ready to proclaim my great Deliverer's praise upon the house-top. I could no more doubt of the favour of God than of my own existence. And such were the impressions then made upon my mind that I was a stranger to doubt or tormenting fear for many years after.

Being appointed to meet a class, I endeavoured to comfort and strengthen my brethren, and to promote the work of God both among the society and others. I found a willingness to do or suffer anything so that I might glorify God, and be a means of saving sinners. After some time I gave a word of exhortation, first in Chester, then in North Wales, Cheshire, and Lancashire; and the Lord was pleased to make my labours acceptable to many, and useful to some, particularly at Parkgate and Neston, where I lived and followed my business near two years. But I had many trials; for the people agreed not to employ me, because I was a Methodist preacher. I was brought before the justices at one of their monthly meetings; but this did not afford my persecutors cause for triumph, for I had words given to me which confounded them all.

Many things were done to prevent me from staying in Neston, but in vain. For, after trying other means, I leased some land there. Then they threatened to press me, which obliged me to get a licence. Afterwards, they threatened

to punish me if I preached in an unlicensed place, and I was obliged to get the house licensed. But this did me little service; for they sent for the man who lived in the house, and, partly by threatenings and partly by promises, prevailed upon him not to let me preach there any more. We then had another house to seek, and could not meet with one but at an extravagant price, near two miles from the town. However, we went thither winter and summer; and some seed was sown that abides to this day; a few sinners were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and for many years they have had a convenient preaching-house to worship God in.

It was strongly impressed upon my mind that I was called to preach the gospel; and I found such desires to do it that everything else seemed burdensome to me, as I judged I was out of my place. And though the persecution and opposition began to cease, and some of the principal gentlemen in the place employed me, so as to give me a fair prospect of doing well with regard to temporal things, yet as I thought I was called to be an instrument in the Lord's hands of saving souls, all worldly prospects were of little account to me. I prayed to God for direction, that I might not run before I was sent, and that His will, and not mine, might be done. This I wished above all things; but at the same time I saw that the saving of one soul would be of more consequence than anything else under the sun.

I had now several invitations to preach in different places; and as I was willing to go

wherever I could, I sometimes took long journeys on foot, and bore my own expenses, which I did with pleasure. After labouring in this manner upwards of two years, I was advised by the preachers who were then in the circuit to give up myself wholly to the work of God. I agreed so to do; and at the Conference held at London in July, 1759, I was appointed for Wiltshire Circuit. After settling my temporal affairs, I set out for my circuit in the month of September following; so that if I am spared till September next, I shall have been twenty years employed in the Lord's vineyard, two of which I spent in Ireland, upwards of one in Scotland, and the rest in various parts of this kingdom.

But were I to give you an account of what happened in every place respecting my labours, success, trials, persecutions, &c., my letter would swell into a small volume. Waiving, therefore, these particulars, I shall only add a few words more.

I can say, to the glory of God, that I have not gone a warfare at my own charges. I mean, it was not in my own strength that I set out, or have continued labouring these many years; and I am sure it was not to enrich myself. Food and raiment were all I could expect, or ever desired, as a temporal reward. For though I have a numerous family, it has principally been supported these fourteen years out of the income of the little estate which Providence entrusted me with. And I have great reason to be thankful that I have been enabled to do the Lord's

work, not of necessity, nor by constraint, but of a willing mind.

If I had desired it, I might long ago have had a settled place, and comfortable maintenance, both for myself and family ; but firmly believing that I was ordained to preach the gospel, I willingly remained where I was called, being persuaded that I could not be more usefully employed than I then was. And I am now of opinion that if it were right for me to choose any employment, I would rather be a Methodist preacher than anything else.

Ever since I began to preach, I have been settled in my judgement touching the extent of the atonement ; believing that Christ tasted death for every man, and that there is a day of grace for all the posterity of Adam, and a door of salvation, at which if they knock, it shall be opened unto them. Indeed, wherever I have yet laboured there have been some visible proofs of success ; and, I praise God, I still find as great a desire to promote the Redeemer's cause and interests among mankind as ever ; and, if my health and strength will permit, I am resolved, through God's assistance, to preach the everlasting gospel as long as I live.

I am, Rev. and dear sir,

Your affectionate and obedient son in the gospel,

ROBERT ROBERTS.

Jeremiah Brettell wrote from Macclesfield in February, 1800 :

DEAR SIR,

You have received the late Mr. Roberts's account of himself, which he wrote many years since. He has now finished his course, and is gone to his eternal reward. He completed the fortieth year of his labours in the Lord's vineyard as an itinerant preacher at the time he came to Macclesfield in September last. He was a man of great integrity and respectability. I had the satisfaction of knowing him nearly thirty years ago. He was then a zealous preacher, and highly esteemed in the churches. He was generally considered as a man of sound judgement, and of an unblamable conversation; and he was not only a very useful minister of the gospel of Christ, but was remarkably humane, and attentive to the domestic concerns of poor families, where he occasionally was, in advising, instructing, and sympathizing with them in their various troubles. By these means he became well acquainted with the common afflictions of many of his poor brethren, and knew how more effectually to be of service to them. He was an example to them in the simplicity of his manner of life and the plainness of his diet, always choosing to give as little trouble as possible wherever he came.

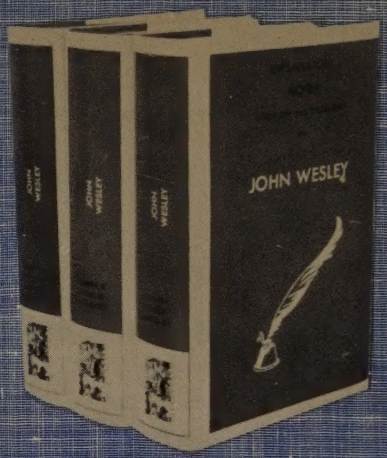
The complaint of which he died was a paralytic stroke. He was attacked with this affliction about twenty-three years since, which affected his speech very much for a time, and caused a more deliberate manner both of thought and expression ever after in his public labours. He had a return of the same complaint about a year ago. After

he came to Macclesfield, and was exempted from his public labours, he was supposed to be better than he had been for some time before, and preached for us a few times.

We had often requested him to pay us a friendly visit, which he accordingly did on the 16th of December last, accompanied by his eldest daughter, when, immediately after sitting down in our house, he began to be affected, and could not articulate his words. The nature of his disorder being immediately perceived, his son was sent for, to whose house he was conveyed, where he had every attention that the skill and affection of his son could provide for him. As he continued about six days in this afflicted state, I repeatedly saw him before he breathed his last, where the Christian and affectionate father was attended by seven of his children in his last hours. I doubt not but he knew them all, and felt in a degree the pleasure that was natural to the affectionate parent and friend. From all that we could learn, he appeared to lie passive in the hands of God, until the Lord took him, which was about two o'clock in the morning of the Sunday following.

We lamented the nature of his affliction, chiefly because of his being deprived of speech; believing that the last testimony of his faith in Christ, his love to God, and the admonitions to his children and friends, might have had a salutary and lasting influence upon their minds. But God, who is wise and good, knoweth what is best, and cannot err in what He doeth.

His obituary, in the *Minutes* for 1800, says: 'He was a faithful minister of Christ above forty years, having reached the period of life when human nature generally fails. His voice and memory were greatly weakened a considerable time before his death. But he was still mighty in the Scriptures, diligent in the work of the Lord, and benevolent in his temper. He was a pleasing fellow labourer, against whose character no charge was ever brought. He lived holy, and died happy in God his Saviour.'

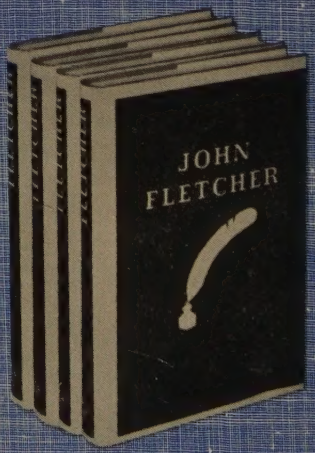


Two hundred and ten (210) years ago John Wesley took his **Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament** to the printer. One thousand sets (1,000) were printed. These sets have been collectors items for many years.

Schmul Publishers through the cooperation of Asbury Theological Seminary (they loaned the text), have made this invaluable three volume set available to Wesleyan scholars again.

Three Volumes, 2,600 Pages, Large Print, Hard Back

$49.95



The Works of John Fletcher. First reprint of Fletcher's Works in 130 years. Rare . . . indispensable to an understanding of the great controversy between Calvinism and Wesleyanism. Fletcher's Checks are unrivaled and unanswerable. This set should be in every preacher's library.

Approximately 2,500 Pages, Hard Back

$59.95